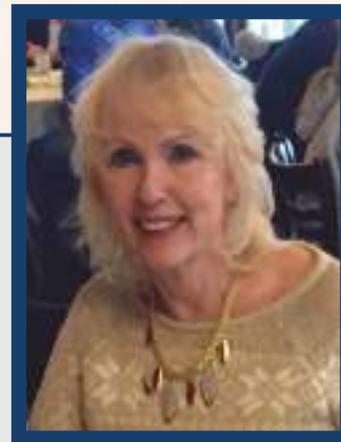




Dedicated to a World Without
Childhood Blindness

“

Thank you Dr VK Raju for saving my sight after LASIK complications. I deeply admire your dedication and commitment to saving and improving people's vision around the world. thank you for giving me the opportunity to publish this coffee table book on the time line of EYE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA .



Elizabeth Bowman

***Dedicated to a World Without
Childhood Blindness***



OUR MISSION:



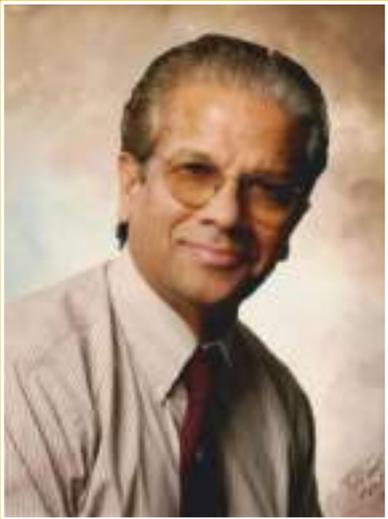
The Eye Foundation of America's (EFA) mission is to prevent blindness by going where the need is greatest- often rural and remote areas of developing countries where there is no medical care or where the cost of the care is prohibitive.

Our primary goal is to eliminate avoidable childhood blindness. Although the Eye Foundation of America serves people of all ages, we have a special place in our hearts for children because it is they who have the most to lose. Visually impaired or blind children grow up without the same advantages as sighted children. Unable to read and write, they often cannot support themselves as adults and may become a burden on their families and /or communities.

Premature babies are also a focus, as they can suffer from Retinopathy of Prematurity, a retinal condition unique to infants born early. With help from our donors and volunteers worldwide, we have been able to screen over 200,000 premature babies and perform treatments on hundreds of babies that are affected by this disease.

In addition to preventing childhood blindness, The EFA plans to touch the lives of 100,000 people in India as a part of its ongoing efforts to eliminate avoidable blindness due to diabetes and diabetic retinopathy – a condition that often leads to blindness if left untreated. In addition to these primary focus points, the EFA also contributes to Vitamin A supplements and education efforts.

About US



V. K. RAJU

M.D., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S.

President & Founder, Eye Foundation of America

Dr. V.K. Raju was born in Rajahmundry, AP, India. He is a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Director of the International Ocular Surface Society, Director of the Ocular Surface Research and Education Foundation, MBBS at Andhra University in India, Chairman of Goutami Eye Institute in Rajahmundry and is the President and Founder of the Eye Foundation of America, a non-profit organization dedicated to realizing a world without childhood blindness.

A partial list of his awards and honors include: AMA Foundation Nathan Davis Excellence in Medicine International Award, Four Time Awardee by The American Academy of Ophthalmology, Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award from WVU, Distinguished Community Service Award from AAPI (American Association of Physicians from India), Pride of the Pride Award from Lions International District 29,

Vaidya Ratna (conferred by Sankaracharya of Kanchi), Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Ophthalmologists of Indian Origin, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the WV State Medical Association. Dr. VK Raju was among the class of 2017 inductees into the University of Toledo Global Medical Missions Hall of Fame and received the President's Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama.

Dr. Raju has published two books, seventeen chapters, and over 100 publications in scientific journals.

Doctor on Vacation Serves Poor

By P. RAMAKRISHNA

VIJAYAWADA — An eight-month-old baby slept under general anaesthesia induced by a modern drug. A doctor worked with a sophisticated instrument to remove a cataract in the baby's eye in an improvised operation theater here recently. The baby's parents were thrilled when they were told the baby had been saved from life-long blindness.

The drug was American—Katamine; the instrument was American—Ocutome. And the surgeon, Dr. V.K. Raju, is an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology in the West Virginia University Medical Center.

Raju recently conducted his fourth eye camp in three years in India. Instead of spending his time visiting friends and relatives or sight-seeing, he chose to devote his

vacation serving the poor. The Rotary Club of Vijayawada hosted the camp at which nearly 175 poor persons were helped to regain sight.

300 Million Afflicted

It is estimated that five to six per cent of the 300 million children in India suffer from some eye ailment or the other. Of them, 70 to 80 per cent suffer from troubles that are curable. The problems can be tackled only through a "camp approach" in the Indian context, Raju believes. In a camp, patients and their attendants are looked after with donations made by philanthropists and doctors lend their services without charging any fees.

The uniqueness of Raju's camps lies in the fact that he brings with him not only the latest technology but also sophisticated equipment and drugs. American drug firms

donated the drugs and Air-India flew them here.

"Why should not Indians profit from latest advances in medicine?" asked Raju at the valedictory function of the camp. "People still ask me whether there are no drugs to cure cataract. Susruta, the renowned Indian surgeon, had said nearly 3,000 years ago there were no medicines which could dissolve cataract and the position in 1981 is no different," Raju said.

Primitive Methods Rapped

Raju said it was unfortunate that non-medical persons persisted with "couching"—that is pushing the cataract into the eye instead of taking it out—a method followed all over the world until the eighteenth century.

Raju made use of Ocutome in his camp. This instrument mechanical-

Continued on page 6



Eight-month-old baby being operated on in Vijayawada for cataract removal by Dr. V.K. Raju, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University Medical Center.

Doctor Aids Poor

Continued from page 1

ly sucks out cataract through a small hole made in the eye. The wound is sutured with the help of an operating microscope. A 75-year-old woman was given an intra-ocular implant after removing her cataract. The normal practice



Dr. V.K. Raju

here is to prescribe glasses after surgery. The synthetic implants popular in the West are more convenient. Raju brought them to India.

Raju intends to start a Susruta Eye Foundation, using the offers of help from the people of West Virginia and Andhra Pradesh. An institution facilitates the bringing of more expertise to India in the treatment of eye diseases. The poor get treated virtually free of cost and post-graduate students from here and abroad learn a lot. Raju this time brought with him here a post-graduate student, Dr. Lawrence Minardi.

Dr. J. Shankar, a Rotarian, who helped organize Raju's camp, said Rotarians were happy that they could do service to the poor. Shankar studied nuclear medicine at the University of Michigan.

The year
it all began...

1977

Work started in 1977 when Dr. VK Raju visited India and was asked to look at a farmer's eyes. From this event, the idea for a charity organization was sparked. Soon after, Dr. Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India. In April of 1977, Dr. Raju gave his first professional presentation regarding the 'Differential Diagnosis of Leukocoria' at the West Virginia Academy of Pediatrics.

The year
it all began...
1978-82



1978

In January of 1978, Dr. Raju spoke at Jaycees in Morgantown, WV regarding the Free Eye Camp in India. In March the same year, he spoke at the West Virginia Academy of Family Practice regarding 'Management of Common Corneal Problems'. August and October, respectively, brought talks regarding the 'Need for Corneas in West Virginia' and 'Cataract Surgery in a Developing Country' to Dr. Raju's agenda.

1979

Dr. VK Raju is awarded the Indian Lions Club Award of Service for the Blind. Dr. Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India again, making a promise to return as much as possible to meet the needs of the patients in the areas, this time bringing a senior ophthalmology resident with him. 'Cataract Surgery in a Developing Country' was presented by Dr. Raju at the Royal College of Surgeons meeting in Jamaica in April 1979.

Dr. Raju performed bilateral corneal transplants on the patient to the right, who is now a successful pharmacist and continues to give back to the Eye Foundation of America for saving his sight as a child.

1980

The Eye Relief Project in India as once again visited by Dr. Raju, accompanied by a different senior ophthalmology resident. 'Ketamine Anesthesia in Pediatric Eye Surgery' was presented at the International Society of Eye Surgeons Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in January of 1980. In February, Dr. Raju presented 'Control of Drainage Bleb in Trabeculectomy' before the Indian Ophthalmological Society.

1981

The Eye Relief Project in India was once again visited by Dr. Raju, accompanied by a different senior ophthalmology resident. At the January 1981 All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, Dr. Raju spoke on 'Recent Advances in Keratoplasty' and 'Antiviral Agents in Herpetic Eye Disease'.

1982

From 1982 through 1983, Dr. VK Raju took part in a fellowship under H.E. Kaufman, M.D., at Louisiana State University, New Orleans. The Eye Relief Project in India was once again visited by Dr. Raju, accompanied by a different senior ophthalmology resident. In 1982, Dr. VK Raju was asked to be a guest lecturer at the Marion County Medical Society and Kanawha County Ophthalmological Society programs. During his time at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting in January, he spoke on 'Management of Corneal Thinning and Perforation', and 'Assessment of Macular Function in Anterior Segment Surgery'.

Donors Vital to Restore Sight to Many

By ARATI RAO

NEW YORK — An overwhelming majority of the blind population of India could have their sight restored if donors were available, according to Dr. V.K. Raju, ophthalmology professor and surgeon at West Virginia University (WVU).

His comments to *India Abroad* coincided with a Press Trust of India report of the disclosure in the Lok Sabha (lower house) by the Health Minister that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in March, 1970, registered to donate her eyes to the R.P. Center, All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi.

200 vs. 600

Citing World Health Organization figures, Raju noted that the incidence of blindness in the West was less than 200 out of 100,000 people, whereas more than 600 out of 100,000 are blind in India and other Third World countries.

There are 5 million cases of cataract in India alone. Cataract is also responsible for 14 to 15 percent of child blindness in India. However, the most widespread need is for corneal transplants.

The cornea is the transparent portion in the front of the eye through which the color of the iris is visible. It can be transplanted in an operation of less than two hours. Donated corneas must come from recently deceased persons, and the interval between death and cornea removal preferably must be less than six hours. Transplantation must occur within 48 to 96 hours,



Dr. V.K. Raju, lower right, examines a 14-year-old girl at clinic at Vijayawada. Watching him are Ann Jacobs, an assistant, top center, and Don Schieve, a senior resident at WVU, center, depending on the medium of storage.

Flown From Abroad

In the United States, 71 eye banks serve for about 10,000 corneal transplants annually. In India, despite the Corneal Grafting Act of 1965, which legalized ante-mortem pledges of eyes, and the establishment of a few well-functioning eye banks, donor tissue is still flown in from foreign countries.

Of 106 operations that Raju performed in Vijayawada, last January at his fifth annual eye clinic there, the two corneal transplants used eye tissue from the Sri Lanka Eye Bank because local donors were unavailable.

In his report for 1982, the president of the All India Ophthalmological Society, Dr. Shiva Reddy, cited insufficient numbers of surgeons and various socio-economic problems as additional contributors to the high rate of blindness.

'Matter of Number'

Don Schieve, a senior resident at WVU who accompanied Raju on his trip, told *India Abroad* that he felt the chief obstacle to eye care was "a matter of numbers." He also noted the difficulties of disseminating information to farflung rural areas.

A student of Raju, Ann Jacobs, who helped operate his clinic, worked with eye conditions and diseases rarely or never encountered in the United States.

Foundation Set Up

Governmental red tape and restrictions on individual import of medicines have made it difficult for doctors like Raju to visit India for clinics. Raju has therefore organized the Susruta Eye Foundation, named after a third century B.C. surgeon, to facilitate exchange of ideas and services between the U.S. and India.

The foundation aims to establish continuing care in Indian eye hospitals as well as to hold annual clinics. It hopes to establish a fellowship enabling a doctor from India to spend time in the U.S. for continuing medical education.

The year
it all began...

1983

Dr. VK Raju is awarded the Andhra Pradesh State of Ophthalmology Society's Gold Medal; The Eye Relief Project in India was once again visited by Dr. Raju, accompanied by a different senior ophthalmology resident.

During the Chicago meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, Dr. Raju presented a poster on the 'Rapid Diagnosis of Ocular Herpes Simplex Injections'. At the Ahmedabad Academy of Ophthalmology's National Symposium on the Cornea in 1983, Dr. Raju presented 'Aphakic and Pseudophakic Bullous Keratopathy', 'Keratoplasty in Children', 'Refractive Keratoplasty', and 'Corneal Physiology. He also presented 'Radial Keratotomy Controversy in the United States - What Can We Learn?' during the All Indian Ophthalmological Society, meeting in January of 1983.



The year
it all began...

1984-88

1984

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India. At the West Virginia University Family Practice Conference, Dr. Raju presented 'Common Ocular Problems' alongside Hal Vagner. Earlier that year, he spoke at the First Annual Regional Conference on Deafness and Blindness in Harper's Ferry, WV, sponsored by WV State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, At the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, he spoke on 'Interferon and Ocular Virus Disease' and 'Management of Perforating Injuries Involving Lens and Vitreous'.

1985

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India. During the Asian Pacific Congress in New Delhi, he presented 'Herpetic Eye Disease; A Brief Review'.

1986

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India. At the 7th annual Ophthalmology conference at West Virginia University, Dr. Raju spoke on the 'Presence of NA-K ATPASE Inhibitor in Human Congenital Hereditary Cataract'. For the first year, Dr. Raju was invited to speak at the American Academy of Ophthalmology regarding 'Foundations of Modern Ophthalmology'. He was also honored as the guest lecturer for the All Indian Ophthalmological Society Meeting in Kanpur.

1987

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident, further promoting the devotion to education. 'Foundations of Modern Ophthalmology' was presented at the American Academy of Ophthalmology for the second year in a row.

1988

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident. 'Eye Camps in India and Prevention of Blindness' was presented by Dr. Raju at the International Congress of Ophthalmology in Singapore. He also presented 'Foundations of Modern Ophthalmology' during the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in Las Vegas.

1989

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident. In 1989, Dr. Raju spoke at the American Academy of Ophthalmology in New Orleans for the fourth year in a row regarding the 'Foundations of Modern Ophthalmology'.

1990

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident. While speaking at Osmania University in 1990, Dr. Raju covered 'Herpetic Stromal Disease' and 'Understanding Astigmatism'. During the Indian IOL Implant Society meeting, he presented 'Cataract Surgery in Children', 'Stitchless Cataract Surgery', and 'Indications of AC IOLs'. He was honored to present the keynote address regarding 'Keratoplasty in Children' at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting in addition to 'Keratoplasty in Herpetic Eye Disease'.

1991

Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident. 'Foundations of Modern Ophthalmology', a poster, was presented at the Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology in Anaheim in 1991. While at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, Dr. Raju spoke on 'Cataract Surgery in Children', 'Indications and Contraindications of AC IOLs', and 'Indication of Corneal Transplants in Children'.

1992

Dr. VK Raju celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the Eye Relief Project in India, taking with him a medical student and a resident. 'Epikeratophakia: Current Status' and 'What is New in Herpetic Eye Disease' at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting in 1992 in addition to 'Antiquity of Indian Medicine' at the Cogan Society meeting.

1993

Dr. Raju is awarded the TANA Award (Telugu Association of North America) for Outstanding Achievement in Medicine. Dr. VK Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India again, taking with him a medical student and a resident. Dr. Raju was also instrumental in the establishment of Sri Kiran Institute of Ophthalmology in Rural India (Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh) which opened in January 1993. This 90 bed facility with full range of ophthalmic services served countless people in the impoverished region. In 1993, Dr. Raju presented 'Preventable Blindness in Children' at the Annual Conference of the Department of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University. At the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, Dr. Raju spoke on 'Small Incision Surgery without Phaco' and 'Problems with AC Lenses'.

The year
it all began...

1989-93



The year
it all began...

1994-97



1994

HHH (Heart & Hand for the Handicapped, New Jersey) Outstanding Heart Award given to Dr. VK Raju. The Eye Relief Project in India was visited twice by Dr. Raju in 1994, once in January and again in October. While at the Cogan Society meeting in 1994, Dr. Raju presented on the 'History of Charaka Club'. That same year, he presented several topics at the All- Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, including 'Recent Advances in Cornea and External Disease', 'Management of Subluxated PC IOL', 'Astigmatism in Cataract Surgery', 'Complications of YAG Laser Capsulotomy', 'Recent Advances in Keratoplasty', 'Scleral Pocket Incision: A Review', 'Herpetic Keratitis', and 'Intraocular Implants in Children'.

1995

HHH (Heart & Hand for the Handicapped, New Jersey) Outstanding Heart Award bestowed on Dr. VK Raju for the 2nd consecutive year in addition to the West Virginia University International Service Award and the Lions Club International (Morgantown) Jarrett Award. Dr. Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India in January and August. Dr. Raju was honored to present 'Blindness in Children' during the International Day Symposium at West Virginia University. He also spoke on 'Infectious Keratitis', 'Current Status of Refractive Surgery', 'Results of Collaborative Corneal Transplant Study', 'Recent Advances in Cataract Surgery', 'Keratoplasty in High Risk Cases', 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery', 'Complications of YAG Laser Capsulotomy', and 'Current Status of Anterior Chamber IOLs' while at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society.

1996

The American Academy of Ophthalmology granted Dr. VK Raju an Achievement Award in addition to the ATA (American Telugu Association) honoring Dr. VK Raju with the American Telugu Association Award. The Eye Relief Project in India was visited by Dr. Raju in January and July. In 1996, Dr. Raju presented at the All-Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting and the 11th AfroAsian Congress of Ophthalmology. Topics included 'Trabeculectomy with Mitomycin', 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery', and 'Computers in Ophthalmology'.

1997

Major S. Dutt Memorial Medal from the Ophthalmology Society of West Bengal was given to Dr. VK Raju. For the first year since its inception, Dr. Raju made three visits to assist in the Eye Relief Project in India- January, July, and September. Between visits to India, Dr. Raju lectured on the 'Language of Medicine' at the Monongalia County Medical Society Meeting'. During his time in India, he also presented multiple talks including 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery', 'Nucleus Fracture Techniques During Phaco', 'Corneal Endothelium and Modern Cataract Surgery', and 'Computers in Ophthalmology'.

1998

Dr. VK Raju visited the Eye Relief Project in India in January and August.

1999

1999- Dr. VK Raju visited the Eye Relief Project in India in January and September.

2000

Rajasthan State Ophthalmic Society received Dr. VK Raju as their Guest of Honor for their 2000 session and he was also awarded the Rotary International (Morgantown) Honor Award. Dr. Raju took part in the Eye Relief Project in India three times again, this year in January, August, and November. The year 2000 brought several additional opportunities for speaking engagements for Dr. Raju. He started the year in Madurai, where he presented on 'Corneal Transplants in High Risk Patients', 'Recent Advances in the Management of Pterygium', 'Refractive Cataract Surgery', and 'RK, PRK and LASIK: Where Are We?'. In February 2000, he presented on 'Ayurveda: Past and Present' during Integrated Medical Grand Rounds at West Virginia University.

He spoke again on Ayurvedic principles and the association of perioperative care for the Nurses of North Central West Virginia meeting in April. He then travelled to Jaipur to present two topics, 'Cataracts in Children: 22 Years of Experience in Eye Camps' and 'Advances in Refractive Surgery'.

2001

In 2001, Dr. VK Raju was given a Gold Medal for Contributions to Advance Ophthalmology, the AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin Honors, and the Melvin Jones Fellow Award from Lions Club International Foundation. In 2001, Dr. Raju made two trips to the Eye Relief Project in India.

Dr. Raju spoke on 'Eye Care in Rural India' and 'Eye Camps and Eye Care in Rural India' at the West Virginia Center on Aging in Morgantown, WV. Earlier that year he spoke on the Bowers Manuscript and Ayurveda at the Cogan Society Meeting in San Francisco, California. He was honored to be the keynote speaker at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting in January, discussing 'RK, PRK and LASIK:



The year
it all began...

1989-93



Where
are we ?

2002-03

2002

2002 marked a huge year in the life of Dr. VK Raju, as he was honored with the Vaidya Ratna award, a Legislative Citation from the House of Delegates of the State of West Virginia, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Ophthalmologists of Indian Origin, and Outstanding Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He was also awarded the Dr. Hardia Gold Medal for Best Paper on Refractive Surgery. In addition to the influx of awards received, Dr. Raju was still able to make three separate visits to assist in the Eye Relief Project in India. These visits marked the 20th year of the Eye Relief Project. At the All Indian Ophthalmological Society meeting, Dr. Raju presented on Intacs and advances in refractive surgery. He also spoke on 'Observation on Language of Medicine' at the Cogan Ophthalmic History Society meeting in New York.

2003

Dr. VK Raju was once again honored with the Honorary Title of Vaidya Ratna from the Veda Vyasa Sabha Trust, Chennai. Twice in 2003, Dr. Raju visited the Eye Relief Project in India. 'Ayurveda and Modern Medicine: Missing Links' was presented as the Valedictory address at the 2nd International Herbal Conference by Dr. VK Raju.

Eye surgeon who helps the needy to be honored

The Maryland chapter of the American Association of Physicians of Indian origin selected Dr V K Raju, a West Virginia eye surgeon, for the Free to Achieve Award.

Dr Rao was honored for his philanthropic efforts in providing eye care to the needy people in India. He will be presented the award soon, Dr Dan Kumar, a member of the chapter's executive committee, said.

The Free to Achieve Award has been developed by Corathers' Health Consulting, a Morgantown, WV, based firm that specializes in physician practice enhancement initiatives and physician-hospital relations.

According to Cathy Corathers, chief officer of the firm, a set of criteria has been established to select the award winner. These include utilizing key talents to create an added value for others and a capacity to lead and delegate.

One of the primary founders of the Srikiran Eye Institute in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, India, Dr Raju has been volunteering his services to provide eye care to the needy, including thousands of children, for more than 20 years and teach ophthalmologists in India state-of-the-art skills. He is the founder and president of Eye Foundation of America, which was established to help ensure adequate health care for the underprivileged of the world. The foundation provides funding for the institute as well as various

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eye-care agencies.

A fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons, he is a member of numerous professional societies and recipient of several other honors, including the gold medal of the AP State Ophthalmology Society.

Dr Raju runs an eye clinic in Morgantown. He also serves as chief of the ophthalmology section at the Monongalia General Hospital and as clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University.



■ Dr V K Raju checking a patient

Because many later Vedic hymns are ascribed to Susruta, it follows that he must have flourished during the latter part of the Vedic age, which would place him around 1000 B.C. Hoenle contends that a larger portion of the *Atharvaveda* admittedly belongs to a period as early as 1000 B.C., since the hymn in question is included in the older portion. Johnston-Saint suggests that Susruta was a contemporary of Buddha (600 B.C.) because of the style of language used.¹⁶ However, after a thorough study of the subject, Wae concluded that Susruta Sanskrit was prepared in an extremely early age, probably from the third to the ninth century B.C. He based his argument on the ancient form of construction of the Sanskrit language used in the manuscript. The *Sushruta* was translated into Arabic before the end of the eighth century A.D. and was named *Kitab-1-Susrat* by Abhillasiah. Rhazes repeatedly quotes Susruta as the foremost authority in surgery.¹⁷ Sanskrit was translated into Latin by Hoesler, into English by Hoenle, and into German by Muller in the last century.

Susruta divides his *Sushruta* into six parts, covering all the branches of medicine, including hygiene, midwifery, ophthalmology, toxicology, psychosomatic ailments and materia medica. Susruta considers surgery the first and foremost branch of medicine and states: "Surgery has the superior advantage of producing instantaneous effects by means of surgical instruments and appliances. Hence, it is the highest in value of all the medical faculties. It is eternal and a source of infinite piety, imparts fame and opens the gates of Heaven to its votaries. It prolongs the duration of human existence on earth and helps men in successfully fulfilling their missions and earning a decent competence in life."

Ophthalmology

Susruta devotes 18 chapters to describing 76 different diseases of the eye of which 51 require operations. Susruta who is said to be the first surgeon to have removed cataracts, described varieties of cataracts along with the depression method of couching by the anterior root.

Susruta described and used 101 *bhāsa* instruments and 20 sharp instruments, which "should have an edge so fine that it should divide the hairs on the skin."

According to Susruta, the eye, which "resembles the tip of a cone," is composed of five basic elements: the solid earth (*Bhu*) form muscles, heat (*Agni*) is in the blood that courses in its veins/arteries, air (*Vāyu*) forms the black part (iris/pupil), the fluid element (*Jala*) forms the liquid part (vitreous), and the wind (*Akasa*) forms the lacrimal ducts/sacs for discharge of secretions. Anatomically, he outlines five subdivisions (*Mandala*) of the eye: eyelashes (*Pakvāsa-mandala*); eyelid (*Virvāsa-mandala*); sclera/cornea (*Soeta* for *Sukta*-*mandala*); choroid (*Kriāsa-mandala*); and pupil (*Driāsa-mandala*), which "looks like a hole and is the size of a Lentil seed." *Sandhis* represent the "joints" where the mandalas bind or connect. An example of a disease involving one of

the *Sandhis* is allergic blepharitis (*Krimi-granthi*): "a swelling (*granthi*) characterized by itching at the joining of the eyelashes with the eyelid."

Medical treatment for these ocular conditions was formulated according to which component of the *Dasha* was predominantly abnormal. Matured clarified butter (*ghri*), breast milk, and Saindhava Salt were frequently used, in addition to plants and meats in the form of eye drops (*Achhotanta*, made by folding and squeezing materials through a piece of silk), salves (*Ajāna*), snuffs (*Nasya*), and fumigation (*Dhūma*). Additionally, leech-soaked bandages, venesections, soothing massages (*Gāyatrī*), and emetics/purgatives were employed.

As one would expect in a region so close to the equator, ocular conditions sensitive to ultraviolet light, such as cataract and pterygia, were common maladies. In addition to the technique of cataract extraction, Susruta describes such modern concepts as antisepsis, anaesthesia, and postoperative care. The following is a direct translation from the original Sanskrit of what may be the first record of extracapsular extraction:

"...This procedure is auspiciously performed primarily in the warm season... [Preoperatively] the skin is rubbed with a pledget of cotton saturated with an oily medicinal followed by a heated bath. The patient is given a light refreshment. The sick room is fanned with vapours of white mustard, bellium, nimba leaves, and the resinous gums of shala trees (in order to rid the area of insects and the diseases they harbor)... Incense of *chitrabisi* is used in addition to wine for sedation... [Technique] The patient sits on a high stool with the surgeon facing him. The hands are secured with proper fastenings. The patient is asked to look at his own nose while the surgeon rests his little finger on the (bony margin of the outer angle of the orbit), holding a *Yasa* Vakra *Sakala* between his thumb, index, and middle finger. The left eye should be pierced with the right hand, and vice versa. The eye is entered at the junction of the medial and lateral two-thirds of the outer portion of the sclera. If a sound is produced following the pushing of a watery fluid, the needle is in the correct place, but if the puncture is followed by bleeding, it means that it is misplaced. The eye is then sprinkled with breast milk. Care is taken to avoid blood vessels in the region. The tip is then made to incise the (anterior capsule) of the lens. With the needle in this position, the patient is asked to blow down the nostril, while closing the opposite ear. After this, lens material (*Kapala*) is seen coming alongside the needle. When the patient is able to perceive objects, the needle is removed... [Postoperatively] indigenous roots, leaves, and ghee are applied with a lined bandage. Patient then lies flat and is asked not to reclinate, sneeze, cough or move. The eye is examined every fourth day for ten days. If the whitish material recures, the same procedure is repeated..."

Many stages of pterygium (*Amra*) are described as distinct diseases. Once medical treatment with the topical



The year
it all began...
2004-05

2004

2004 marked the Best of the Show Award for a film presented at American Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting. In addition to this award, Dr. Raju made three trips to help with the Eye Relief Project in India. 2004 also marked the expansion of the Eye Relief Project to Kabul, Afghanistan. He presented at the South Eastern Regional Meeting regarding the Eye Foundation of America's work in India. At the 3rd International Symposium on Herbs, he discussed 'Tridocha, Ayurvedic, Herbs, and the FDA. While at the Delhi Ophthalmological Society meeting, Dr. Raju presented on the following topics: 'Pathogenesis of Recurrent Pterygium', 'Piggyback IOLs', 'PRELEX: The Future of Refractive Surgery', and 'Refractive Surgery Update'. Earlier that same year, Dr. Raju discussed 'Management of Recurrent Pterygium' at the All Indian Ophthalmological Society Meeting in Banares.

2005

The Pride of the Pride Award from the Lions International District 29 was awarded to Dr. VK Raju in 2005. A new program initiative was started in 2005 as Dr. Raju performed screenings during the Diabetic Screening Project in India.

Efforts were maintained in the Eye Relief Project in Kabul Afghanistan with a visit by Dr. VK Raju for the second consecutive year. Dr. Raju did presentations on 'Corneal Transplantation in High Risk Patients' and 'Advances in the Management of Recurrent Pterygium' at the All Indian Ophthalmology Society.

Where
are we ?

2006-08

2006

An honorable mention went to Dr. VK Raju on behalf of the American Medical Association Foundation. After visiting the Eye Relief Project in India in February, Dr. VK Raju was accompanied to the Eye Relief Project in India in July by 3 medical students. The momentous occasion of the Official Opening of the Goutami Eye Institute in Rajahmundry AP India was celebrated in 2006. Dr. Raju once again toured domestically and abroad to present on several topics. These include conjunctivochalasis, limbic keratitis, amniotic membrane transplantations, pterygium surgery, demodex folliculorum, chronic blepharitis, ocular surface disease, Stevens Johnson Syndrome, and fornix reconstruction.

2007

Dr. VK Raju was honored with the Distinguished Community Service Award by the American Association of Physicians of Indian origin. Two visits to the Eye Relief Project in India occurred in 2007. Dr. Raju was honored to present multiple topics at worldwide ophthalmology meetings including the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, and the International Ocular Surface Society. Topics included 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery', 'Sutureless Amniotic Membrane Transplantation for Painful Band and Bullous Keratopathy', 'Amniotic Membrane Transplantation with Fibrin Glue for Pinguecula and Pterygium', 'Corneal Manifestations of Ocular Demodex Infestation', 'Host Conjunctival Inflammation After Amniotic Membrane Transplantation with or without Fibrin Glue for Pterygium', and 'The Role of ProKera in Acute Chemical Burns'.



2008

Paul Harris Fellow from the Rotary International was awarded to Dr. VK Raju in addition to the Martin Luther King Jr Achievement Award from West Virginia University. The Eye Relief Project continued to expand across the globe as Dr. VK Raju visited Iraq (Kurdistan) and Nigeria in addition to two visits to India. 2008 was a busy year for Dr. Raju, as he presented around the globe at several major conferences, including the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons in April, the Regional Eye Institute meeting in Chennai in August, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology in November. Topics included 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery', 'Clinical Applications of Amniotic Membrane', 'Amniotic Membrane in Ocular Surface Disease', 'Advances in the Management of Ocular Surface Disorders', 'Management of Keratoconus with Intacs', 'Clinical Uses of Prokera', 'Ayurveda and Modern Medicine', 'Intacs with Femtosecond Laser', 'Sealing of Conjunctiva-Tenon Gap for Correcting Recurrent Pterygium', 'Sutureless Amniotic Membrane Transplantation in Superficial Keratectomy', a posters for 'Surgical Strategies for Fornix Reconstruction Based on Symblepharon Severity' and 'Sutureless Amniotic Membrane Transplantation for Partial Limbal Stem Cell Deficiency'. He also presented on 'Temporary Sutureless Amniotic Membrane Patch for Acute Alkaline Burns' and 'Minimal Conjunctival Limbal Autograft for Total limbal Stem Cell Deficiency'.



Eye Foundation of America: Visions of Hope

Arthur J Pais

Dr. Vishnu K. Raju has received many honors for his humanitarian work in saving the eyes of the poor not only in India but full a dozen countries ranging from Iraq to America – but the criterion he felt Srini Maddala, who earned his doctorate in pharmaceutical studies from Rutgers University this year and began working for a major company, and who presented his first pay check to the Eye Foundation of America that Raju started in 1978, was transcendence.

It was in 1979 that Maddala had corneal transplants to both eyes, at the age of 8. His family had travelled to Morgantown, West Virginia, Raju's home for more than three decades. The surgery was free and most of the other expenses were also born by Raju – now, it was time for Maddala to pay him back.

"You find himself when something like this happens," he said, referring to Maddala's gesture.

Maddala, who attended a luncheon for the Eye Foundation of America last year which raised \$100,000, declared: "If it wasn't the foundation, I would not be here. I would not be talking to you. I would have been blind."

Raju, who is a big advocate of early treatment for eye problems in children, has saved many over the past three decades. "If you catch a child in the first week or first few months of life and do those surgeries, less than an hour's operation and/or anesthesia, you give them 75 years plus," Raju, who has travelled to more than 50 countries to help people with defective vision, said.

He not only sees hundreds of patients in a day, but also teaches other eye doctors. Ask about his annual vacation, and Raju – the father of an ophthalmologist daughter and investment banker son – finds difficulty in recalling when last he had one. He has forgone many vacations to work with indigent patients, particularly in India. "With each visit, I get my sights improved," he says. "It is like I am getting a gift. Sometimes trips like this feel better than a holiday."

The Goutami Eye Institute that he helped establish in Bangalore in Andhra Pradesh, where he grew up before going to the United Kingdom for higher studies, will also serve as a teaching institute. Its success precedes that of Srikrish Eye Institute in Kakinada that he and his childhood friend, Chandra Sankaranthi, established in 1983.

Under Raju's supervision, over 2000 ophthalmologists have been trained in advanced courses. Staff members, ophthalmologists and general physicians were introduced to the latest developments in ophthalmology and eye care. The Institute has provided service to more than 400,000 patients and 50,000 surgeries have been performed. It has become an autonomous institution, and Raju has raised over \$4 million to establish and fund the two facilities.

"You can never be tired of giving back," he says. "But to have real success, your intentions should be pure. It is a spiritual act." His daughter Leela V. Raju is now getting ready to spend one month in Andhra Pradesh to help the poor and marginalized people.



Dr. Vishnu K. Raju with his mother, left, and grandparents, right.



Her father's humanity and passion stimulates whatever she undertakes, Leela says. "This is not a job for him; it has never been a job," she says. "He does his work with passion and he enjoys it. His enthusiasm and passion are infectious."

The many awards Raju has received include the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award for his contributions to the medical profession; the Distinguished Community Service Award given by American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO); and the Martin Luther King award from West Virginia University Center for Black Culture. He is also the chairman of the "prevention of blindness" committee of the Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin.

In addition to his busy practice and globe-trotting, Raju, who specializes in cataract and refractive surgery, loves teaching. "Whether I am in a classroom at a university or teaching a group of doctors, I feel I am giving out more than medical knowledge," he says. He is currently a clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University, where he has been teaching since 1976. Students there rate him as not only being innovative and knowledgeable but also approachable.

A lot of his charity work is helped by some of his former patients, and in a spontaneous case by young entrepreneur Jay Reddy. "When Jay was studying at the university, he had come to see for a check up," Raju recalls. "I don't usually take money from students. I ask them to make a small contribution to my charitable work."

Jay Reddy never forgot the gesture; in the intervening years he has contributed over \$250,000 to Raju's charities. Raju says he feels fulfilled thanks to his association with the Eye Relief Project, in which he travels periodically to India and other developing countries to volunteer his surgical services and teach advances in ophthalmology. In

America, he has conducted surgeries at the Native American settlements in Arizona and New Mexico.

"Each day when I get up, I remind myself that I should make a difference," the soft-spoken Raju says. He told a newspaper recently: "Every morning, I wake up and start the day by saying, 'Good morning, God, rather than 'Good God... morning.'"

From his West Virginia base, Raju conducts approximately 25 corneal transplants annually, 200 to 300 cataract surgeries and handles 2000 to 3000 patient visits, the local newspaper *The Dominion Post* has written.

Doctors in America have too many comforts, he complains. "There is an emphasis in many of us, there is also an intellectual poverty," he says. "Some of this can be relieved by voluntary service. We have so much potential to help others – and in doing so, we may be helping ourselves much more than others."

Part of the reason he is conscious of the need for humility in whatever he does is because of the Good Lord's influence on him. He likes to read books with spiritual input, he says.

In profiling him, a local newspaper wrote Raju has performed over 15,000 volunteer operations in India and reduced vision (75 per cent) were non-paid in his spare time. For the past two decades, he has assembled medical teams to visit developing countries to treat patients in mobile eye camps or clinics.

Raju's camps are funded through donations by pharmaceuticals and American pharmaceutical companies. Physicians donate their services without receiving fees. Raju estimates that he has spent over half-million-dollar gifts in acquisition of equipment, with the objective of providing world-class eye care to the needy.

He talks about how in India he has to be far more successful and alert than in America. In America, for cataract surgery, the average patient age is 70, but in India and developing nations, Raju says that he performs cataract surgery on many more children, due to such causes as malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies and birth defects.

"Here, I realize that if I do not perform a surgery, it's probably because the patient is seeking another surgeon or getting the procedure done at a later date," he said in an interview. "In rural India, if I don't perform the surgery, I know in my heart that a person, possibly a child, may live a life of blindness."

In praising his work, *The Dominion Post* wrote: "ophthalmologists like Dr. Raju have transcended their knowledge into a vision that offers not only insight to many, but hope, as well."



Dr. Vishnu K. Raju

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Eye Foundation of America

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The year
it all began...
2009-11

2009

Dr. VK Raju travelled to India again to participate in the Eye Relief Project in India in January and August. In April of 2009, he presented his paper, 'Diagnosis and Management of Demodex Blepharitis' presented at the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery meeting in San Francisco.

2010

Further expansion of the Eye Relief Project brought Dr. VK Raju to Tanzania in August 2010 as well as continued visits to India. In June of 2010, he served as a guest speaker at the West Virginia Academy of Ophthalmology meeting.

2011

American Academy of Ophthalmology bestowed the Senior Achievement Award on Dr. VK Raju. The Eye Relief Project in Iran and India were visited by Dr. Raju a total of 3 times in 2011. Dr. Raju presented a symposium on "Endophthalmitis" at Goutami Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, AP, India. While in Tehran earlier that same year, Dr. Raju was honored as the guest speaker for the Iranian Ophthalmology Society. Dr. Raju presented a poster, titled 'Bloodless Tarsorrhaphy' at the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery meeting in San Diego in addition to presenting a film and a paper at the same meeting regarding 'Bilateral Simultaneous Cataract Surgery in Children'.

Where
are we?
2012

2012

In 2012, Dr. VK Raju was the Guest of Honor at GITAM University in Andhra Pradesh, India. He was given the Rameshwar Sharma MD Gold Medal Oration from the Indian Academy of Medical Sciences, Rajasthan Chapter, Dr. Raju was received as the Guest of Honor at the All Indian Ophthalmology Society Meeting and was given the Gold Medal from the President during that conference. Dr. Raju visited India twice in 2012 to take part in the Eye Relief Project, marking the program's 30 year anniversary. Dr. Raju did the guest lecture, entitled, 'Globalization of Medicine, Its Effect on Developing Countries' at GITAM University in Visakhapatnam, India. At the 70th anniversary of the All-Indian Ophthalmic Congress meeting, Dr. Raju presented 'Our Profession, Professionalism in the New Millennium' and a "Dry Eye" symposium. Dr. Raju gave the Rameshwar Sharma Oration at the National Academy of Medical Sciences in Jaipur, India as well.

Exploring new frontiers in philanthropy



Dr. V.K. Raju

In between his extensive charity especially helping indigent children get eye surgery in time through the Eye Foundation of America, lecturing at a university in West Virginia, and running his own business, Dr. V.K. Raju also presents lectures at major international conventions and special events at universities. Soon he will be going to Rajasthan where he will offer the Dr. Rameshwar Sharma Oration on *Enriching Medicine Through Centuries: What's Next?*

Dr. Sharma was associated with a medical college in Jaipur for many years and became the vice chancellor of the University of Rajasthan.

Dr. Raju will also be discussing the Chakra Club of New York and how, starting in 1998, it had sought to promote ancient Indian medicine. He will also offer arguments why the Western medical establishment rejected the Indian system of medicine.

"With my vast interest in medical history," he says, "and my ongoing reading and research into Ayurvedic way of life, I will attempt to connect present-day technological advances with the wisdom of the ancients."

Dr. Raju, who has helped eye clinics in nearly two dozen countries, including Afghanistan and India, often traveling to these countries to supervise surgeries and give lectures, has been honored four times by the American Academy of Ophthalmology for his teaching, research and humanitarian work. He will be the All Indian Ophthalmic Society President's Guest of Honor in February, 2012 at Cochin.

After getting his medical degree from Andhra University, Dr. Raju traveled to the University of London to complete an ophthalmology residency and fellowship. In the US, Dr. Raju completed a surgery fellowship at Louisiana State University. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and of the American College of Surgeons.

In addition to being a very skilled and experienced ophthalmologist, who specializes in corneal and refractive surgery, Dr. Raju is a clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University, where he has been teaching since 1976. Before that, Dr. Raju spent two years teaching at the Royal Eye Hospital of London. He is also the director of the International Ocular Surface Society, the director of the Ocular Surface Research and Education Foundation.

All the honors he has received don't excite him as much as his work for the Eye Relief Project in which he travels

periodically to India and other developing countries to volunteer his surgical services and teach advances in ophthalmology; he is particularly interested in teaching and researching ways to prevent blindness in children.

"It costs very little, less than \$200 (including the infrastructure cost and post-surgery care), to give a second life to a child," says Dr. Raju who runs the Monoglia Eye Clinic in Morgantown where he has lived more than three decades.

He has also established an endowed lectureship at West Virginia University devoted to issues of ethics and history in ophthalmology.

He started the Eye Foundation of America in 1975 to make eye care available to people who cannot afford it, especially children. The foundation created the Shikha Eye Institute in 1993, which has provided medical care to more than 450,000 patients, and the Gaurav Eye Institute, in 2006, which helps thousands of patients, many at no cost.

According to the Eye Foundation of America Web site, 13 million people are blind in India, and 91 percent of this blindness is caused by cataracts. Dr. Raju focuses on the prevention of blindness in children and teaching them early with the latest technology.

From a 30-minute operation to cure blindness for 70-plus years," he said in an interview with a West Virginia publication, *The Dominion Post*. "Thirty years ago, cataract cataract like that. All of this should be done very early, within the first year or two of [a child's] life. Most modern technology won't help if you don't catch them at time." He also said that sometimes if a cataract is removed, which costs only a few cents, is not available to children, they can become blind very early in life. "If it doesn't reach in time, the child is already blind or deaf," he said.

Although the Eye Foundation of America serves people of all ages, it has a special responsibility for children because it is they who have the most to lose, Dr. Raju says. "Visually impaired or blind children grow up without the same advantages as sighted children," he has written. "Unable to read and write, they often cannot support themselves as adults and become a burden on their families and communities. Education is a great equalizer for children from impoverished families. It can allow them to lead productive lives full of opportunity. Without sight to help them experience their world, blind children often experience a life full of setbacks. Normal development is hindered and education becomes difficult or even impossible. Much of early learning—so much as 80 percent—comes to children through vision. As blind children mature, they find it difficult to learn a trade or start a career. They realize only a fraction of their own potential throughout their lives, which often spans 75 years or more."

He adds: "The great nightmare is that each childhood blindness is easily avoided, prevented, treated, or cured. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that as much as half of all childhood blindness can be avoided by treating cataracts early and by correcting abnormalities at birth. Such medical and surgical interventions usually take little time and are inexpensive. Skilled removal of the cataracts obscuring a child's vision takes only minutes to perform and costs only a few hundred dollars. Delivering vitamin A also is inexpensive. Each child needs only two doses per year to prevent blindness and provide protection against many other diseases. The cost? About 50 cents a dose."

Nowhere else does so little time and money go so far, he asserts. "If the needed medical intervention was an investment opportunity, the return on this investment would be high—75 or more years of a full, productive life in exchange for a few dollars and a few hours' work. In cases like this, the question is not whether to restore a child's sight as much as it is, 'Let us effort make?'"

Dr. Raju, who is in his mid-sixties, has no plans to retire. "I'm keep teaching because you have to keep learning, and learning is my true love," he says. "If you do research and keep learning, you give the best clinical care to the patients."

—Arthur J. Pais

'I don't believe in supplements'

Fitness has been V.K. Raju's mantra for more than five decades. The physician, who is in his mid-sixties, walks with the energy of someone who is in his early sixties.

Why do you pay so much of attention to being fit?
For one thing, there has been diabetes in my family, I believe, for more than four generations. I have been lucky so far. But more important, all medical professionals should set an example. I hate to see at various medical conventions doctors who have put bellies.

You are a professor. You have your business, and you do enormous amount of charity work. How do you make time for physical fitness?

When I am not traveling I go to the gym every day. Even when I am traveling, I will try to go to a gym. Walking is also a great exercise. Walking and meditation helps. I believe in the efficacy of Ayurveda but I also believe that much of Ayurveda is a way of life. I pay special attention to diabetes prevention, not just because it has caused a lot of harm in my family but also because how it affects millions across the world, causing damages to many vital organs including eyes. Saurata wrote long, long ago about diabetes.

It may be pre-diagnosed that an idle man, who indulges in day sleep, or follows sedentary pursuits or is in the habit of taking sweet liquids, or cold and fat-making or essential food, will ere long fall an easy victim to this disease," as Dan Harley quotes Saurata in his book, *Diabetes Rising*.

The total number of diabetes worldwide is projected to rise from 173 million in 2000 to 366 million in 2030. India will have highest number of diabetes affected strategies, real collaboration among the interested groups is needed to combat the tragic consequences of diabetes.

How does Ayurveda help you?

I don't believe in using supplements but nutritious vegetarian food, especially greens in salads, helps a great deal. Supplements have become big business and people are selling all kinds of products offering miraculous effects. I have believed that some of the food we love the most, like fried vegetables, create much harm. So eating right and at the right time is important. Eat at intervals of a few hours and let each meal be light. Even if you are vegetarian, don't think skipping breakfast and having a heavy lunch is not doing harm.

I always say night, exercise right, and most importantly, Do not take yourself too seriously (that means start the day with "Good morning God, rather than Good God, morning").

All the herbs in the world are not going to help anyone if the diet is not balanced, and if there is no power of mind and a lot of mobility. People often find excuses not to exercise. I often tell my colleagues and younger people, change your activities instead of cursing the weather. I firmly believe in the saying, "Exercise gives you more than it takes from you."

How do you manage to eat healthy when you travel?

It is alright if I eat little healthy food than eat full stomach of rubbish. I depend on papaya. I eat it with water and drink it, as I did during my recent visit to Iran. I also manage to procure lentils and make a soup out of it. Peas and vegetables are available everywhere, be it in Iran or Ethiopia. Once you learn that you can manage to eat healthy food, even if it is not available in restaurants, your problems are solved.

—AAP

'Great things are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people'

ARTHUR FRIS

Dr. Vaidyanath E. Raju recently spent four days in Mumbai's Dharavi slum area, working with the Aditya Jyoti Foundation and screening the children for eye problems, giving glasses when needed or bringing them to the hospital when surgery was needed.

"I would like to start a project in Dharavi and few other low-income localities similar to the one we are heading in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, which train school teachers to help detect early vision problems in children and get their vision corrected," he says. "Each treatment costs less than \$1, thanks to the voluntary work of doctors and health professionals."

Raju is among a handful of Indian Americans who have raised philanthropic organizations to give back to the society that nurtured them and nudged them towards greater excellence in India and abroad.

"There are so many wonderful Indian organizations in the US but surely we can do better," says Raju, who through the Gokarni Eye Institute has fought for early detection of eye diseases especially among children and whose work has saved thousands of eyes in India, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, and in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Among all the ethnic groups in the US, Indians are on the top in their earnings. If Indian groups work together, that is true leadership. Both the US and India can be benefited. An Steve Jobs once said, 'My model for business is the Beatles. They were four guys who kept each other's kind of negative tendencies in check. They balanced each other and the total was greater than some of the parts. That is how everything works; great things are never done by one person; they are done by a team of people!'"

Raju, who runs the Manassas Eye Clinic in Manassas, West Virginia, is also clinical professor, Department of Ophthalmology, West Virginia University and founder and medical director, The Eye Foundation of America. The foundation also works with the New York and New Jersey-based Heart & Hand for the Handicapped and Blind, which is present all over the United States.

Raju is a recent recipient of the Excellence in Medicine Award, given by the American Medical Association Foundation to honor physicians who represent the highest values of altruism, compassion and dedication to patient care.

Apart from backing Gokarni Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Raju's IMA has also offered help for treating eye problems in Nigeria, Peru, Namibia, Uganda, Mal, Malawi, Ethiopia, Philippines, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

Last year, the Andhra Pradesh state government with



women to become ophthalmic assistants.

"We pay them a living stipend during training and often later graduate to staff our hospitals," says Madhav. "The career training we provide helps them support themselves in places where jobs are difficult to find. 66 percent of the graduates come from poor families."

There is a lack of awareness about eye care among the general public and many eye-care myths are passed from one generation to the next. Raju, Madhav and other physicians with doctors and below. This is often more pronounced in developing countries, where there may be few alternative sources of information.

Apart from counselling patients who have children with eye care problems and educating and advising teachers in children's outreach programs, Gokarni also distributes eye-care brochures in multiple languages and shows educational videos.

Raju is also a strong advocate of fighting diabetes, which has ravaged his own family, and has been advocating a healthy way of life to fight it.

"In the case of eye problems, you need only a surgeon and a nurse to attend to the patient," he says. "In treating diabetes, especially the disease spread over the years, not only the endocrinologist but many others, including nephrologists and foot doctors, are involved."

Diabetes, he stresses, "is going to be the most dominant problem all over the world especially in developing countries. India is a highly developed country with developing

country problems. Hyderabad could become the diabetes capital of India. If the mindset changes, nothing is impossible in India. We always talk about cataract blindness but diabetic blindness is going to be 10 times worse if we are not prepared for it. The Aditya level is early detection of diabetic retinopathy. During the last 25 years, tremendous technological and basic science advances happened. Again, the most modern technology is of no use if it is too late!"

He left his mother to diabetes when she was hardly 60. "I am always conscious of what I eat," he says, "and how I translate it into out of the stress. A long time ago I realized that you don't have to eat a whole lot of food to have a good life. Nutrition and tasty food can be enjoyed in moderation. The simpler the food is, the better the body will be."

An avid reader of Ayurvedic literature in Sanskrit and other Indian languages, Raju notes, "Susruta described (though nobody is sure of the dates - in some eye conditions) described *Pranahat*, a Sanskrit word that means dilated flow of the urine. The surgeon Sushruta wrote: 'It may be prophylactically that an ideal

the help of many non-governmental organizations started the Chakra Chakra - Samrakshana (right to right) program to help over 60,000 children overcome vision problems and the threat of blindness. The program aims at identifying the children with vision defects with the help of about 1,000 education teachers and volunteers across the state. Treated patients will screen all school-going and out-of-school children. During the second phase of the project (December 8, 2012 to January 31, 2014), camps are being organized at the local level with teams of ophthalmologists under the supervision of the State's Blindness Control Society. The children with treatable refractive errors will be provided with plastic lens with a frame chosen by the child. The children requiring further intervention - medical or surgical - will be referred to the third phase, district-level screening by empanelled eye hospitals across the state.

The program is inspired by the Vision for children program initiated in 2007 in Rajahmundry by the Gokarni Eye Institute led by Dr V E Madhav, executive director, and Dr G Madhav, surgeon and medical director. Raju serves as chairman of Gokarni.



The year it all began...

2013-14

2013

MedScape named Dr. VK Raju on the list of Best Doctors in America and he was honored with the American Medical Association Foundation Nathan Davis Excellence in Medicine International Award. The Eye Relief Project in India was visited three times in 2013. Dr. VK Raju presented the keynote speech at the All India Ophthalmic Society meeting in 2013 regarding 'Keratoconus: What is new?' While at the Andhra Pradesh State Congress meeting in Warangal, Dr. Raju gave a guest lecture entitled, '700+ Cataract Surgeries without a Capsular Tear' as well as the keynote address, 'Recent Advances in Keratoconus', 'Ocular Surface Disease - Recent Advances', and 'Small Incision Cataract Surgery'.

2014

Dr. VK Raju received the Gold Medal Award from the International Academy for Advances in Ophthalmology- Bombay Ophthalmologists Association in Mumbai, India in 2014. The year also brought the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award for Achievement in Medicine from the House of Lords in London, the Paul Harris Society Award from Rotary International, and the Gold Medal Oration recognition at Vijayawada Academy of Ophthalmology. In 2014, the Eye Relief Project had three separate visits with Dr. VK Raju. Presentations in 2014 include 'Intacs & Keratoconus' at the All India Ophthalmic Society, 'Multifocal Intraocular Implants: What is New' and 'Keratoplasty in Children' at the Bombay Ophthalmological Society meeting in June.

Area doctor garners international acclaim

Submitted to The Dominion Post

Morgantown ophthalmologist Dr. VK. Raju has been notified by the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation that he is a recipient of the Dr. Nathan Davis International Award in Medicine, one of the foundation's Excellence in Medicine awards.

The honor will be presented at the 10th annual Excellence in Medicine Awards Dinner on Feb. 11, in Washington, D.C., during the AMA National Advocacy Conference (NAC).

A board-certified ophthalmologist, he operates the Monongalia Eye Clinic and serves as a clinical professor of ophthalmology at WVU, where he has been teaching since 1976. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and of the American College of Surgeons.

Named for the founder of the AMA, the Dr. Nathan Davis International Award in Medicine recognizes physicians whose influence reach the international patient population and change the future of their

medical care.

By treating, educating and counseling patients beyond the U.S. border, the physician's work is having a positive impact on health care in the global arena.

Raju is the director of the International Ocular Surface Society and the Ocular Surface Research and Education Foundation, and serves as medical director and past president of the Eye Foundation of America.

He is a proud participant in the Eye Relief Proj-

ect, in which he travels to developing countries to volunteer his surgical services and teach advances in ophthalmology.

Each year, the AMA Foundation honors a select group of physicians and medical students who exemplify the medical profession's highest values: commitment to service, community involvement, altruism, leadership and dedication to patient care, with Excellence in Medicine Awards. The awards are presented in association with Pfizer Inc.

Where
are we ?
2015



2015

In 2016, Dr. VK Raju received the Pravasi Rattan Award, a Gold Medal from NRI Welfare of Society of India in addition to the Presidential Award from the AAPI (American Physicians of Indian Origin). January and November marked Eye Relief Project visits from Dr. Raju.

He also presented at the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada regarding Amniotic Membrane applications. While he was in India in July, he presented on a Community diabetes Prevention and Management Program at the GAPIO Annual Conference.

While in Vietnam the same year, Dr. Raju spoke on several topics including 'Hard Cataracts: How do I manage?' 'External Eye Examination Techniques and How to Avoid Medicametosa', and 'Advances in the Management of Keratoconus.' In Colorado, Dr. Raju presented 'Pandemic of Diabetes: Beyond Ocular Virginia Eye Institute regarding diabetes as well. At the All India Ophthalmic Society meeting, he presented, 'Presbyopia: The Last Frontier in Ophthalmology' and was the chairman of the Free Paper Session on Cataracts.

Eye doc looks at diabetes

Dr. Raju, others will study health impact

BY JIM BISSETT
The Dominion Post

For Dr. V.K. Raju, the Morgantown ophthalmologist who offers free eye care in places around the globe where corrective lenses are a luxury the word "vision" is as nuanced as a sunset over the Grand Canyon.



Dr. V.K. Raju

There's "vision," in the literal definition of his profession: In 1977, he founded the Morgantown-based Eye Foundation of America.

In the nearly 40 years since, he and his colleagues have performed about 300,000 procedures across India, Iraq and Afghanistan without charging one cent.

Then, there's "vision," as the metaphor that motivates his work. After all, it takes a vision, and a work ethic, to front such an effort.

It takes a vision to make all those friends, so you can blink in sync with kindred spirits.

In the weeks ahead, Raju will cast that vision in the direction of the West Virginians he has come to consider as brothers and sisters since he came to Morgantown, in 1976, to do corneal transplants at the old WVU Medical Center.

His foundation is working with Monongalia General Hospital and WVU's School of Public Health to launch a study of the health of a group of people in Mon County and neighboring Preston County who suffer from diabetes or are pre-diabetic.

"We're getting ready to start," he said. It can't come soon enough, he said.

Besides being the sixth-leading cause of death in West Virginia — as noted by the Centers

DIABETES

FROM PAGE 1-B

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — diabetes is a scourge of eyesight here.

Double helping of data

More than 150,000 West Virginians have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, according to the CDC.

Of that number, 38,000 are dealing with diabetic retinopathy, a byproduct of diabetes that chokes off blood vessels to the eye, resulting in legal blindness or blindness altogether.

But there is medical and metaphorical light at the end of tunnel, Raju said, for those patients on course with the disease.

"If you can catch diabetes early and monitor it," he said, "only less than 10 percent of its sufferers will ever have a problem."

That's any medical problem, he said, and that's the focus of the study — even if he is looking at it through the eyes of an ophthalmologist.

The study will look at the fortunes of 50 diabetics and pre-diabetics who will take on a health regimen with disciplined diets and doses of physical fitness.

It's a zoom-lens in reverse, Raju said. You start out small, and then pull back for the larger vista.

Dr. Ranjita Misra likes that approach, too. She directs the public health practice program in WVU's School of Public Health.

Like Raju, she hails from India, and, like him, has provided humanitarian medical services in her home country.

She's also done similar diabetes screening and prevention studies among rural communities across the American southwest, including Texas.

She's done the same up and down Mexico.

Medically speaking, she said, the more things are different, the more they literally are the same, as far as diabetics go. Especially pre-diabetics, she said.

Going back for seconds

While the study here will be clinical, it will also touch on emotions and conditioned responses.

"What I know from that is that people are people," she said, of her research.

"Ninety-percent of people who smoke know that cigarettes are bad for them, but they do it anyway, because it feels good."

Andrea McCarty can tell you about that, too.

She's a dietician and diabetes educator at Mon General who grew up in northeastern Kentucky.

She has family in West Virginia's southern coalfields, where diabetes is prevalent.

In Logan County 15 percent of the 37,000 residents have diabetes, according to the CDC. The county is home to 37 fast-food restaurants.

Raju: "And the local Walmart sells more snack cakes than any other Walmart in the world."

Enter the sociological side of the study.

Is it poverty or a pre-disposition to making unhealthy dietary choices?

Might be a little bit of both, McCarty said.

"We're not as poor as people think we are," she said. "But there is unemployment, and that means stress. When we're stressed, we go for the comfort food. We eat what we know."

However, Raju said, you can't pin it all on Appalachia or poverty.

"I've seen poverty in a lot of countries," he said, "and it isn't the lone factor for diabetes."

More than 100 million people from all levels of income strata in the U.S. have diabetes or pre-diabetes, he said, with a prognosis as loaded as a double-fudge sundae for dessert.

"By 2050, if the current trends continue, one in three adults in the United States will have diabetes," he said.

Recipe for responsibility

So, where do you start?

By charting the food-fortunes, and offering positive reinforcement, for 50 people across Monongalia and Preston counties under the shadow of diabetes, his School of Public Health colleague said.

"As a practitioner and researcher, I look at the things we can change," Misra said, "and that's diet. Fast-food is so convenient. Instead of spending \$2 or \$3 on a burger, is there a healthier alternative?"

How about, she suggests, whole grain over white bread? Fiber, over empty calories.

Vegetables. Just because they really are good for you.

"We want people to start thinking long-term," she said. "We want them to start thinking about their risk factors."

Raju wants the test subjects to feast on a full meal of empowerment.

"People are going to have positive results," he said. "They're going to be encouraged, and emboldened, because they'll be taking responsibility for themselves. We are going to help each other."

The year it all began...
2013

Where
are we ?

2016

2016

The President's Lifetime Achievement Award was bestowed upon Dr. VK Raju from President Barack Obama in 2017 along with the New York State Assembly Citation. Dr. Raju visited India three times in 2016 for the Eye Relief Project. 2016 proved to be a busy year for Dr. Raju in regards to presentations around the globe. Dr. Raju presented the Amniotic Membrane Applications Course at the American Academy of Ophthalmology in Chicago. He was a guest lecturer at the AAO History Symposium and presented presbyopia research in Baroda, India along with introducing graduate students in Biochemistry. He also served as a visiting professor, speaking on 'Childhood Blindness: A Global Tragedy: Eye Foundation of America's Efforts', 'Dissection of and Demonstrations of Eye Parts: Laboratory and Lectureship', 'Is there medical treatment of Presbyopia?', and 'Different Parts of the Eye: Their Metabolism in Relation to Function' at the University of Baroda, India. Dr. Raju also lectured on, Presbyopia Management at the Ophthalmic Conference in Tamilnadu State. He performed the Keynote Address at the Indian Ophthalmic Society meeting in Kolkota, India in February, as well as the Chairman Symposium on Lasers in Diabetic Retinopathy, and a talk titled 'Pandemic of Diabetes: beyond Retinopathy and Cataract'.

EDITORIAL

Marching on diabetes

Area study not seeing
eye to eye with dreadful disease

"Seeing is not always believing."

That's what Martin Luther King concluded decades ago while staring down evil.

This week as we mark the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington it's fitting to remember the civil rights movement symbolically began with one small woman.

Some will say it's a stretch to equate a small study — set to get under way — with that of Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat.

However, this clinical study of 50 people with diabetes and prediabetes in Monongalia and Preston counties may be the beginning of a movement to reverse generations of unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles.

Though diabetes might sound like a small, isolated problem endemic to Appalachia, it's more accurate to describe it as a public health emergency — nationwide.

More than 100 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes. That includes 150,000 West Virginians, who have been diagnosed with type 2 or adult-onset diabetes, while nearly 500,000 West Virginians are estimated to have prediabetes.

Logan County is the diabetes capital of the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. A 2008 study estimates this county's rate of diabetes as almost 15 percent.

The local initiative that will chart the diets and exercise of area residents is a collaborative effort by the private, nonprofit and public sectors: Mon General Hospital, the Morgantown-based Eye Foundation of America — led by Dr. V.K. Raju — and the WVU School of Public Health, respectively.

We applaud each of these organizations for their efforts and want to encourage the 50 participants in their efforts, as well.

Though many of us may block out alarming reports on public health, diabetes has a way of asserting itself into the public eye, kidney, nerves and so on.

In those with diabetes, the pancreas is unable to produce enough insulin, the hormone that cells need to convert sugar into energy. In the absence of insulin, blood sugar levels soar, which leads to blackouts, comas and even death.

The life-prolonging measures taken to combat this dreadful disease are a constant. Regimens of artificial insulin injections, medications, blood-sugar level checks and diet control consume your life.

Diabetic complications, including vision problems, kidney failure, nerve damage and non-traumatic amputations, are also a constant threat.

Still some with diabetes describe their affliction as not so painful, while their blood sugar levels wreck their body.

It's true, you may not feel or see it. But we view this study as a positive development in the fight to quell and control this epidemic.

And in this instance, seeing is believing.

WV Physician VK Raju, MD 2013 Recipient of the AMA Dr. Nathan Davis International Award in Medicine



VK Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS, of Morgantown, WV and long-time WVSMA member was honored February 11 at

the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation's 2013 Excellence in Medicine Awards.

He is a recipient of the Dr. Nathan Davis International Award in Medicine, which recognizes physicians whose influence reach the international patient population and change the future of their medical care. By treating, educating and counseling patients beyond the U.S. border, nominees

have a positive impact on health care in the global arena.

The Dr. Nathan Davis International Award in Medicine honors physicians who represent the highest values of altruism, compassion and dedication to patient care.

In the award letter sent to Dr. Raju, the AMA Foundation said, "the caliber of our nominees was awe-inspiring, and your selection from such an impressive group speaks volumes in recognizing your dedication to the profession of medicine."

VK Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS, is the Founder and Medical Director of the Eye Foundation of America (EFA), a charitable organization that provides

eye care in 21 developing countries to combat avoidable childhood blindness. For more than 30 years, Dr. Raju has led the EFA in providing free and subsidized treatment in remote areas and engaging in health education, practitioner training and research efforts that have advanced the visual health of 1.7 million people. Dr. Raju is also a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University and has lectureships in various universities across the United States. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and the American College of Surgeon and has written more than 300 papers, 100 publications and 12 book chapters.

The year
it all began...

2017-18

2017

Dr, VK Raju was recognized several times in 2017. He received a community Service Award from Member of Congress, an Indian American Press Club Humanitarian Award, a Certificate of Recognition from American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery Foundation, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from West Virginia State Medical Association. One of the proudest moments was Dr. VK Raju's induction into the University of Toledo Global Medical Missions Hall of Fame Class of 2017. Dr. Raju visited India three times in 2017 for the Eye Relief Project. At the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in New Orleans, Dr. VK Raju presented an Amniotic Membrane Applications Course.

2018

Dr. VK Raju received the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery Foundation Certificate of Recognition for Chang Humanitarian Award. Dr. Raju visited India three times in 2018 for the Eye Relief Project. In December, Dr. Raju presented 'Pandemic of Diabetes and Its Health Consequences- Can we talk about prevention?' at GAPIO/AAPI Global Health Summit in Mumbai. A second presentation was made regarding 'Diabetes Prevention and Management' at Shankara Netralaya, Kolkota.

Where
are we ?

2019

2019

In 2019, Dr. VK Raju received the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery Foundation Certificate of Recognition for Chang Humanitarian Award again, the Rangaraya Medical College Certificate of Appreciation on the occasion of Rangaraya Medical College Diamond Jubilee. He also received honors by the Vice President of India, M. Venkiah Naidu, on the occasion of Rangaraya Medical College's Diamond Jubilee. Dr. Raju presented on Eye Bank Advances at the MOSHIN Eye Bank Meeting in Visakhapatnam.



The Staff of Monongalia Eye
Clinic,
Monongalia General Hospital,
And West Virginia University
Medical School
Wishes to Congratulate
Dr. V.K. Raju
for his global accomplishments and his
recent award,
**The Mahatma Gandhi
Pravadi Samman Award,**
presented to him in the House of Lords in
London.

Looking out for the blind

In these days of economic uncertainty, says professor, ophthalmologist and philanthropist Dr V K Raju, people are viewing their contributions to charity in a new light, with many wondering which humanitarian effort can deliver the most bang for the benevolent buck?

Dr Raju, with more than 30 years experience as a surgeon, has facilitated thousands of eye surgeries for the poor in many places, including India, Afghanistan and several African countries. He speaks about turning a child's life around by preventing blindness with a vitamin A supplement that costs only pennies for a dose. He is talking particularly about the situation in India where the organization he founded in Morgantown, West Virginia over three decades ago, where a few hundred dollars can fund sight-restoring surgery for a person who would otherwise experience a life filled with missed opportunities such as a lack of education. For children, the benefits may span as many as 75 years-a lifetime of benefits, he adds.

The Eye Foundation of America, which Dr Raju has been running for a long time, is poised for a major expansion this year in many rural pockets in India. It is funded by Dr Raju's own contributions and the donations he receives from some of his patients and the people at large. It has a new president, Jay Reddy, the foundation's second one, who recently succeeded Dr Raju. The West Virginia businessman, says Dr Raju, will bring new entrepreneurial skills and philanthropic aspirations to the organization.

Dr Raju recently received the American Medical Association's Dr Nathan David International Award, which honored him, describing him as an extraordinary person in medicine. It also recognizes his efforts for his contributions in the fight against blindness and offered tribute to the lives that he has touched through sight-saving procedures worldwide.

Dr Raju recently announced '100,000 Lives,' a fundraising campaign aimed at providing eye care to 100,000 people in rural India during 2014.

The campaign will focus on those who suffer from diabetes and are at risk for, or may already be suffering from diabetic retinopathy - a condition that often leads to blindness if left untreated. Studies have shown that if diabetic retinopathy is detected and treated early, blindness can be averted up to 90 percent of the time.

It's estimated that more than 61 million people in India have diabetes and that one out of every two are unaware of their condition. More than half India's diabetic population lives in rural areas where needed health care is virtually non-existent. Dr Raju is looking for the campaign to raise \$1 million.

"Our fundraising campaign has been created to cover both the hard costs of getting our people and equipment to the remote areas that are so desperate for this care," he said, "as well as a way for us to economically source the technology and equipment," he said.

He is not looking at the mission as a charity.

"We have to empower people - not unlimited charity is not our goal," Dr Raju says. Education will play an important role in preventing blindness among children.

Eighty percent of our learning is through vision," he



***The Eye Foundation,
the creation of Dr V K Raju
that addresses preventable
blindness, is doing more than
its fair share around the globe***

said, adding that that was why his foundation focuses on blindness avoidable in childhood.

The foundation also seeks to provide a good education on dealing with diabetes.

"Diabetes today is going to bankrupt developing countries if the present trends continue. Even developed nations feel the burden of diabetes-related diseases," said Dr Raju, whose mother died of diabetes complications when he was young. "Unlike a few decades ago, today there is a lot of literature available in changing our lifestyles and leading a life that will keep away dangerous diseases."

Diabetic retinopathy is the result of blood sugar levels weakening blood vessels in the retina. Over time this causes blood to seep into the eye - often leading to blindness. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that nearly 20 percent of the world's population with diabetes (61.3 million people) lives in India. For Dr Raju and the foundation see that just as dire as those statistics are, the prevalence of people going blind from diabetic retinopathy in rural India is an immense concern.

Data suggests that if diabetic retinopathy is detected and treated early, blindness can be averted up to 90 percent of the time. Dr Raju is striving to bring that level of success to rural India where screenings are rare and access to treatment is virtually nonexistent.

"Blindness from diabetic retinopathy is so preventable that our upcoming mission will have a profound effect on the life of virtually every person that we treat," Dr Raju said. "Diabetes and its complications are going to be the worst in developing nations. Most of the organizations concentrate on cataract blindness and diabetic blindness

may become 15 times worse than cataract blindness. Most cataract-related blindness occurs in relatively older people, whereas diabetic blindness can affect individuals during their more productive years."

The Eye Foundation of America this year will deploy healthcare teams for eye care clinics in India and other countries, including Tanzania. Dr Raju and his support team will spend several weeks in India.

Even ancient Indian sages had warned again sugar-related diseases.

"It may be prognosticated that an idle man who indulges in day sleep, or follows sedentary pursuits or is in the habit of taking sweet liquids, or cold and fat-making or emollient food,' Susruta wrote, 'will ere long fall an easy victim to this disease.'

On a personal level, Dr Raju, who looks athletic and can be mistaken for a man in his mid 50s, leads a spartan life, even when he travels and makes sure that he eats simple but nutritious food. "If nothing else is available, I am very happy with lentil soup and yogurt," he says.

Foundation President Jay Reddy, who had consulted Dr Raju many years ago, says his dream is a world in which everyone has equal access to education, whatever their social or economic status. He believes that the foundation's goal of eliminating avoidable blindness is a giant step in that direction. He calls education a 'great equalizer,' especially for underprivileged children, who stand the most to lose from vision problems.

Reddy is founder and former CEO of ProLogic, Inc, a company that delivers technology solutions to the US government. He oversaw the business as it grew from one person to over 300 people in 2008, and led the company through a merger year. He is now its chairman.

Reddy was born in southern India and came to the US after graduating from the Institute of Bangalore with a degree in computer science. He went on to earn a master's degree from Virginia Tech and an MBA from West Virginia University. He has been active in the foundation for nearly a decade and is involved with other nonprofits that promote equal access to education for the world's children.

He has admired Dr Raju's work for many years. The West Virginia-based ophthalmologist envisioned the Eye Foundation of America in 1979 after volunteering his spare time to conduct eye camps and provide free eye care for years in his native India. He created the Foundation to extend the work's scope and to partner with other organizations who shared the same goals, maximizing its capabilities many times over.

Dr Raju also helped found the Goutami Eye Institute in 2006, a fully equipped eye hospital in Rajahmundry, with a wing dedicated to children's eye problems. The institute, which is also a teaching hospital, has trained 200 ophthalmologists, served 400,000 patients, and performed 50,000 surgeries in the short time it has been in operation.

Educated in India, Great Britain, and the US, Dr Raju has a large private practice in Morgantown where he is also an adjunct clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University's School of Medicine. He spends his 'spare' time teaching and performing surgery and medical services on a volunteer basis for the Eye Foundation of America.

For more information, contact,
<http://www.eyefoundationofamerica.org>

Dedicated to eliminating avoidable blindness

For over 35 years, Dr VK Raju has volunteered his time and money to combating blindness at home and abroad, inspiring many around him to a lifetime of charity work

Some people make things happen. Some watch it happen while others wonder what has happened. Put India-born Dr V K Raju in the first category. Although this West Virginia ophthalmologist moved to the US many years ago, he never left his home behind – and he leaves his roots with his work. He makes a difference in the lives of thousands of West Virginia residents in his private practice – and thousands more in India when he returns there on his volunteer missions.

For over three decades, Dr Raju, who studied and trained in India and London, has committed himself to combating avoidable blindness at home and abroad. Avoidable blindness, Dr Raju explains, is which can be treated or prevented with today's knowledge and resources. He has helped restore sight to hundreds of thousands of patients worldwide and inspired those around him to commit to a lifetime of learning and volunteer work.

In 1977, Dr Raju organized The Eye Foundation of America as a way to exchange ideas between the United States and India and to provide fellowships for physicians in developing countries. The foundation has since trained American doctors on how to establish clinics worldwide and conducts research projects.

Dr Raju recently expanded the program of voluntary services to reach 200,000 diabetics in India and in West Virginia. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that nearly 20 percent of the world's population with diabetes (61.3 million people) lives in India, and therefore, Dr Raju's volunteer work in India takes immense significance.

All of this volunteer work in India and elsewhere is done through the Eye Foundation of America.

Dr Raju's humanitarian work began in 1977, shortly after he accepted a faculty position at West Virginia University. "I went on a vacation in India, and a farmer came to show his eyes to me, and I did not have any instruments [to treat him]," he said.

The lack of medical care available around his hometown of Rajinmundry prompted Dr Raju to return to India the next year and provide free and subsidized eye care services to local residents, especially in rural areas.

Two years later, Dr Raju began making annual "eye relief" trips to India, recruiting other doctors and eye care professionals to come with him.

Through these "eye camps," Dr Raju and his team were able to provide much needed care to large numbers of patients without the need for them to travel to a hospital – overcoming a major obstacle in the delivery of health care in India. Today, all the surgical procedures are performed at Goutam Eye Institute in Andhra Pradesh.

Only screenings, refractions and so forth continue to be performed in eye camps. This is an economical way to deliver healthcare to many.

Dr Raju says he experienced incredible changes in medical



Clockwise, from left, Dr V K Raju; Dr Raju attending to a patient; Dr Raju in the operating theater at the Goutam Eye Institute in India.

practice in India during the last 30 years, but also stressed the need for healthcare systems around the world to focus on prevention and primary care, rather than just tertiary or specialty care. "The US setup a primary care health system in the 1920s, but in India, with a growing population with diabetes and swelling diabetic retinopathy, too much focus on specialty care these days is bad news," he explains. "There are pockets of excellence there in India, but we're talking about 1.3 billion people. Tertiary care is wonderful; it makes sensational news, and makes money too. But primary care and secondary care are the most important for diabetes."

When it comes to solving real-world problems, Dr Raju quoted his late mentor, Rufin Arfin Burn, MD. "There are three solutions for every problem," he said. "The first is education, the second is education, and the third is education." Dr Raju emphasized the need to educate patients, physicians, and politicians alike to ensure efficient healthcare delivery. Patient education is one of the biggest challenges he faces as an ophthalmologist, both in the US and the developing world. As a physician, he has worked tirelessly to give patients knowledge that is critical to how they care for their eyes.

Dr Raju estimates that the foundation has provided critical care to more than 2 million people globally. Its staff has performed more than 500,000 sight-restoring operations to date.

The Eye Foundation of America also works with Johns Hopkins University on vitamin A deficiency interventions in 14 countries. "A single 80,000 vitamin A tablet taken twice a year by children below the age of 5 could give thousands a chance of 75 years of productive life," he explains.

In addition to dedicating a large amount of time and effort to help those in need, Dr Raju has donated much of his own personal wealth to fund the foundation's projects – all in all, more than a million dollars. Many of his friends and co-workers in the US and India joined and supported the foundation immensely in the last 10 years.

"I give all my LASIK money to the foundation," he explains. "Each time I do a LASIK here, 50-60 children will get glasses

in some other part of the world or, two children will get surgery for congenital cataracts and have 75 years of life to live."

Dr Raju's foundation also recently announced that it was working with the Goutam Eye Institute in India to provide international learning opportunities for ophthalmology students who have an interest in diabetic retinopathy.

The program will provide students hands-on experience performing in-the-field diabetic retinopathy preventative screenings as well as hospital-based experience at the Goutam Eye Institute, which is also a teaching hospital.

In the past few years, Dr Raju and other ophthalmologists in his support group have helped the vision-impaired in Afghanistan and Iraq as well. "It was a logical step," he said. "Somebody asked me, 'Why Afghanistan?' and I said, 'India may not need me anymore,'" Dr Raju said.

"A lot of people need medical care all over the world," he said. "If everybody does a little, we'll see a big change."

The Eye Foundation of America. In the previous years, will deploy healthcare teams for eye care clinics in India and beyond, including other countries such as Tanzania. Dr Raju, himself, with support team members will spend time in India at least three times during the year.

Dr Raju said he finds each trip both rewarding and educational. "One thing I love most is learning," Dr Raju said. "There is never enough we can learn in our lives."

Education is very important to Raju – learning the wisdom and mistakes of others to improve our lives. One of the lessons he's learned helped shape his own life.

"If you want to be happy, make others happy," he said. "I love what I do." His wisdom has been rewarded as well, with multiple honors, among others, being the "Top Ophthalmologist" in the World International Association of Ophthalmologists in 2014; the American Medical Association's "AMA Foundation Nathan Davis Excellence in Medicine International Award 2012"; and the "Distinguished Community Service Award" by the American Association of Physicians of Indian origin 2007.

And Beyond

In the coming years, the Eye Foundation of America hopes to continue steady growth and reach. We look forward to caring for more children around the world and helping to prevent avoidable blindness in children and adults. We are as passionate as ever regarding diabetes and the steps needed to prevent complications from this disease, as well as initiatives to provide educational opportunities to the public. We hope to open another hospital to help further our services, creating better lives for the residents of impoverished and remote regions. Without donors, supportive friends and family members, and the service of our medical professionals, we would not be able to continue our mission. For more information regarding the Eye Foundation of America, please visit: www.eyefoundationofamerica.org



Sounding the alarm bells over diabetes in India

Quietly, but steadily India-born Dr V.K. Raju has created a movement focusing on the urgency of containing the potential diabetes epidemic in India.

The International Diabetes Federation estimates that nearly 20 percent of the world's population with diabetes (6.3 million people) live in India, and therefore, Dr Raju's volunteer work in India takes immense significance.

Although this West Virginia ophthalmologist moved to the US many years ago, he never left his home behind - and he honors his roots with his work. He makes a difference in the lives of thousands of West Virginia residents in his private practice - and thousands more in India when he returns there on his volunteer missions.

All his volunteer work in India and elsewhere is done through the nonprofit Eye Foundation of America, which focuses on curative and preventive medical procedures on eye and networks in remote areas of the developing world, where there is no medical care or its cost prohibitive. India remains Dr Raju's main focus, primarily because diabetes there is increasingly becoming the most cause for preventable blindness.

Dr Raju recently expanded the program of voluntary services to reach 500,000 diabetics in India and in West Virginia.

Quoting a report in the *Australian Medical Journal*, Dr Raju says, "India currently faces an uncertain future in relation to the potential burden that diabetes may impose upon the country."

Although the Indian urban population, Dr Raju explained, has access to reliable screening methods and anti-diabetic medications, such health benefits were not often available to the rural patients. There was a disproportionate allocation of health resources between urban and rural areas, and in addition poverty in rural areas may be multi-faceted, he said.

"Food insecurity, illiteracy, poor sanitation, and dominance of communicable diseases may all contribute, which suggests that both policy makers and local governments may be underestimating and under-prioritizing the looming threat of diabetes," he said quoting the *Australian Medical Journal*.

It is predicted that by 2030 diabetes may affect up to 79.4 million individuals in India, while China (22.3 million) and the United States (30.3 million) will also see significant increases in those affected by the disease.

Obesity, Dr Raju said was one of the major risk factors for diabetes, yet there has been little research focusing on this risk factor across India. Despite having lower overweight and obesity rates, India has a higher prevalence of diabetes compared to western countries suggesting that diabetes may occur at a much lower body mass index (BMI) in Indians compared with Europeans.

Therefore, relatively lean Indian adults with a lower BMI may be at equal risk as those who are obese. Additionally, studies indicate, Indians were genetically predisposed to the development of coronary artery disease due to dyslipidemia and low levels of high-density lipoproteins; these determinants make Indians more prone to development of the complications of diabetes at an early age (20-40 years) compared with Caucasians (50 years) and indicate that diabetes must be carefully screened and monitored regardless of patient age writes India.

To reduce the disease burden that diabetes creates in India, Dr Raju said appropriate government interventions and coordinated efforts from all the stakeholders of the society were required. Clinicians may be targeted to facilitate the implementation of screening and early detection programs, diabetes prevention, self-management counseling, and therapeutic management of diabetes in accordance with the appropriate



Clockwise, from left, Dr V.K. Raju. Dr Raju attending to a patient; Dr Raju in the operating theater at the Ganes Eye Institute in India.

local guidelines form the backbone of controlling the predicted diabetes epidemic.

"What India needs is the will to contain diabetes on the operational and policy levels," Dr Raju said. "With all the advancement in medical sciences, India needs contribution from the professionals (physicians), people and the politicians and diabetes in India, just like polio, will be a thing of the past."

For over three decades, Dr Raju, who studied and trained in India and London, has committed himself to containing avoidable blindness at home and abroad. Avoidable blindness, Dr Raju explains, is which can be treated or prevented with today's knowledge and resources. He has helped restore sight to hundreds of thousands of patients worldwide and inspired those around him to commit to a lifetime of learning and volunteer work.

In 1970, Dr Raju organized The Eye Foundation of America as a way to exchange ideas between the United States and India and to provide fellowships for physicians in developing countries. The Foundation has since trained American doctors on how to establish clinics worldwide and conduct research projects.

Dr Raju's humanitarian work began in 1977, shortly after he accepted a faculty position at West Virginia University. "I went on a vacation to India, and a farmer came to show his eye to me, and I did not have any instruments [to treat him]," he said. The lack of medical care available around his hometown of Rajahmundry prompted Dr Raju to return to India the next year and provide free and subsidized eye-care services to local residents, especially in rural areas.

Two years later, Dr Raju began making annual "eye relief" trips to India, recruiting other doctors and eye-care professionals to come with him. Through those "eye camps," Dr Raju and his team were able to provide much-needed care to large numbers of patients without the need for them to travel to a hospital - overcoming a major obstacle in the delivery of healthcare in India. Today, all the surgical procedures are performed at Ganes Eye Institute in Andhra Pradesh.

Only screenings, refractions and so forth continue to be performed in eye camps. This is an economical way to deliver healthcare to many.

Dr Raju says he experienced incredible changes in medical practices in India during the last 30 years, but also stressed the need for healthcare systems around the world to focus on prevention and primary care, rather than just tertiary or specialty care. "The US setup a primary care health system in the 1920s, but in India, with a growing population with diabetes and soaring diabetic retinopathy, too much focus on specialty care these days is bad news," he explains. "There are pockets of excellence there in India, but we're talking about 1.3 billion people. Tertiary care is wonderful; it makes sensational news, and makes money too, but primary care and secondary care are the most important for diabetes."

When it comes to solving real-world problems, Dr Raju quoted his late mentor, Kalla Arthur Bann, MD. "There are three solutions for every problem," he said. "The first is education, the second is education, and the third is education."

Dr Raju emphasized the need to educate patients, physicians, and politicians alike to ensure efficient healthcare delivery. Patient education is one of the biggest challenges he faces as an ophthalmologist, both in the US and the developing world. As a physician, he has worked tirelessly to give patients knowledge that is critical to how they care for their eyes.

Dr Raju estimates that the foundation has provided critical care to more than 2 million people globally. Its staff has performed some 300,000 sight-restoring eye operations to date.

Dr Raju and the Eye Foundation are also working closely with the West Virginia University's School of Public Health, Monongalia General Hospital and the Rotary International to launch a study on pre-diabetes in the state. The focal point of the program is prevention and management of diabetes.

Additionally, Dr Raju is actively involved with the Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (GAPIO) and its US president Dr Sanku Rao. GAPIO represents about 1.2 million physicians of Indian origin, working in India and globally and focuses on improving healthcare standards.

VADREVVU 'V.K.' RAJU, MD

HOMETOWN:

Morgantown

FAMILY: Wife, Rani; daughter, Leela; son, Ashok and daughter-in-law, Priya; grandson, Dilan; parents, V.V. Narasimha Rao and V. Syamaia

EDUCATION: Arts College, Rajahmundry, India; Andhra Medical College, India; Royal College of Surgeons, London, UK; and Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, UK

EMPLOYER AND OCCUPATION: Monongalia Eye Clinic; Ophthalmologist

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS: American Medical Association; West Virginia State Medical Association; West Virginia Academy of Ophthalmologists; American Academy of Ophthalmology; American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery; All India Ophthalmic Society; International Ocular Surface Society; Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons; Fellow American College of Surgeons; Rotary International Paul Harris Society; Lions International Melvin Jones Fellow; Paton Society; American Medical Association Foundation's International Physician of Excellence (2013); MedScape placed him among the Best Doctors in America (2014)

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS: 35 years of commitment to combat childhood blindness across 21 countries. Trained more than 200 ophthalmologists and technical staff in eye care. Four-hundred-plus ophthalmologist medical students exchange between the United States and India. Establishment of endowments to WVU, Johns Hopkins, University of Pittsburgh and Columbia University for creating lectureships in ongoing education. Established two eye institutes in India for service, teaching and research. Doctors and students from 20-plus countries visit the institutes for training.

THE NOMINATOR: Dr. Raju works hard to combat blindness, especially in children, both in the U.S. and in India, through his eye institutes. He is committed to educating others including many ophthalmologists and medical students. He donates his time to many worthy causes. He is heavily involved in diabetes education and prevention. In his private practice, he takes his time to make sure all his patients understand their conditions and how to handle them, whether they are 2 or 92. He doesn't hesitate to take more time if parents of young children, or family members of older patients, need comforting words or more explanations.



Program to help those with type 2 diabetes

Participants can learn how to manage illness

BY DAVID BEARD
The Dominion Post

A WVU School of Public Health pilot program may pave the way to help reduce type 2 diabetes in West Virginia, across the nation and around the world. It's part of a collaborative effort between the Public Health school,



V.K. Raju

founder of the Eye Foundation, said, "If we really collaborate, I feel we could not only do in-

Rotarians involved in activities inspired by the Rotarian Action Group for Diabetes, and the Eye Foundation of America.

Dr. V.K. Raju, a Morgantown ophthalmologist, Rotarian and

credible work in West Virginia, it could be an example for the rest of the world."

Ranjita Misra, with the School of Public Health, is running the one-year program. Twenty-four adults with diabetes are meeting Sunday afternoons at the Woodland United Methodist Church on the Mileground.

The program, she said, includes physical activity, cooking lessons, guest speakers and more, to help the participants

learn to manage their illness. The program opened with fasting blood work, and participants will be checked periodically.

This Sunday Raju is offering free eye exams for the participants, before and after the afternoon meeting.

It's about helping learn to change their behavior, Misra said. "It's not as easy as we think it is." To help them along, they

SEE DIABETES, 2-A

Collaboration key to treatment

Local diabetes initiative helping residents learn how to manage medical condition

School may be the best place to learn hard lessons. For instance, if you're told attendance is compulsory, but the teacher doesn't take roll, beware.

If your adviser attempts to dissuade you from enrolling in 21 credit hours of class in a semester, listen up.

The takeaway from such advice is that success requires self discipline and moderation.

If we don't discipline ourselves, or practice moderation in all things, someone or something will do it for you.

This week we reported on a pilot program that's under way in our region to help reduce type 2 diabetes in West Virginia. The year-long program is a collaborative effort between WVU's School of Public Health, local Rotarians and the Eye Foundation of America.

For now, the West Virginia Diabetic Initiative has a limited enrollment, but if successful, hopes to expand its reach across the state and elsewhere.

Though diabetes might sound like an isolated problem endemic to Appalachia, it's more accurate to describe it as a worldwide health emergency.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, affecting more than 90 percent of the 26 million Americans with diabetes. More than 100 million Americans in total are diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes.

Some 150,000 West Virginians have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes — nearly 10 percent of the population. The number of West Virginians estimated to have prediabetes is estimated at 500,000.

The average annual cost of care for those with diabetes is, of course, higher than that of the general population without diabetes.

But for those with diabetes and its complications, those dollar figures quadruple, according to a 2012 American Diabetes Association study.

The local pilot program, which got under way in October, combines a dose of exercise, cooking lessons, speakers and education.

Blood work is also done periodically, while the diets and physical activities of participants are charted weekly. An eye exam is being offered through the program this weekend.

We applaud each of these organizations for its efforts and want to encourage each of the program's participants in their efforts, as well.

Some with diabetes describe their affliction as not so painful, but it's still a central part of their life.

Much like discipline and moderation, if not practiced, you may not feel or see diabetes, but if left untreated the results will wreck your life.

Reversing generations of unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles is not going to happen next week, or next year.

Like many issues, it stops and starts with education, but the first lesson starts with self control.

News India Times

October 24, 2014

Dr. Raju felicitated at House of Lords

Dr. VK Raju received the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award at the House of Lords, London on October 9, 2014. He is the founder and medical director of Eye Foundation of America, founded in 1979. The Foundation is dedicated to combating childhood blindness around the world. To contribute, you may visit

www.eyefoundationofamerica.org



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Trump's picks for his cabinet: A different league from his predecessors
Dozens of billionaires and millionaires: Many with no government experience



Don Trump, second son of the late President Richard Nixon, has a net worth of \$2.5 billion. Steve Mnuchin, undersecretary of Treasury, has a net worth of \$62 million.

NEW YORK (UPI) President Donald Trump's Cabinet picks have revealed a focus on his building a wall, his allies, his friends, and close inner circle. The 17-member list of his nominees as of Dec. 10, 2016, included 10 billionaires and at least two millionaires with a combined net worth of about \$4.5 billion, according to reports by the Bloomberg. There were no billionaires in the first cabinet of Barack Obama.

The report also says that more than half of Trump's nominees have not prior government experience. Only 40% of appointees as of December 10 have government experience while it was 86% for Bush and 87% for Obama.

The Indian Panorama New Year Special Issue Articles and advertisements are invited for the New Year Special Issue of The Indian Panorama. Cut off date: December 23, 2016

The Indian Panorama hosts an 'Evening with a Purpose'

Dr. VK Raju presents his vision of a world without childhood blindness
'Lakshmi ka alankar daan hai': HR Shah, Chairman & CEO of TV Asia



All the ceremonial inauguration with a traditional lighting of the lamp. L to R: Dr. Aruna Jain, Consul AD New, Anandita Rai, Dr. VK Raju, Prof. Ashraf Saluja, Mr. Ajay Luthra, Mrs. Parvati Datta, Ravindra Sharma, Prof. Lata, Parvati Sharma, Peter Madhala, HR Shah, Shashi Lakshmi.

LONG ISLAND, NY (UPI) The Indian Panorama hosted a well-attended fundraising dinner for the Eye Foundation of America on Thursday, December 15 at Cadillac in Jericho, Long Island.

Dr. VK Raju, an internationally reputed ophthalmologist who is founder and president of the Eye Foundation of America, was the guest of honor and he

HR Shah, CEO of TV Asia was the Chief Guest.

In his welcome speech, Prof. Ashraf Saluja, President and Chief Officer of the Indian Panorama said, "I thank everyone present here for their support to a beautiful and noble cause. This is an evening with a purpose to recognize the tremendous humanitarian work done by Dr. Raju."

HR Shah, CEO of TV Asia was the Chief Guest.

In his welcome speech, Prof. Ashraf Saluja, President and Chief Officer of the Indian Panorama said, "I thank everyone present here for their support to a beautiful and noble cause. This is an evening with a purpose to recognize the tremendous humanitarian work done by Dr. Raju."

Priyanka Chopra named UNICEF Global Goodwill Ambassador

NEW YORK (UPI)—Priyanka Chopra, an Indian actress, has been named as UNICEF's Global Goodwill Ambassador at UNICEF's 5th Anniversary celebration at the United Nations headquarters in New York, December 12. The appointment was announced on Page 6.



The 'Global' actress poses with UNICEF's Secretary of the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Gov. Chris Christie accused of pushing 'Revenge Bill' to punish Press for Bridgegate Coverage

TRUSTON, N.J. (UPI)—New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie is pushing a bill that would bar the newspaper that attacked him over the Bridgegate scandal when it dies.

The proposed legislation, which passed through the Assembly appropriations and Senate budget committees Thursday and is headed to a vote, would punish the state bar for its inquiry.



Bridgegate is a headache for Christie. Two of his former allies have committed to Lane (Christie's ally) Christie seems to be in a possible media coverage.

The Indian Panorama hosts an 'Evening with a Purpose'

Continued from Page 1

After the lamp lighting ceremony, Dr. Raju gave a brief presentation about his mission. "To eliminate childhood blindness."

"The last 10 years, I am working on this issue which is as old as time itself. Just 1 year is required to see 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade but my new friends have joining me in this regard," said Dr. Raju. He mentioned through his presentation, he has already helped or blind children grow up without the same advantages as sighted children and become a burden on their families and communities. "We need more steps to bring a change. First is education, second is education and third is education."

A U.S. session followed and Dr. Raju answered a few questions from the gathering.

While introducing the Chief Guest of the event, Mr. HR Shah, Prof. Ashraf said, "He needs no introduction. He has created an impact in the field of health. His greatest virtue is that he did not forget the better and his past. He always looks back to his past."

Dr. HR Shah, in his speech stressed on the importance of "Vision." "Without vision, you can't see the world. It is dangerous there was vision disease. The ophthalmologist working a great job for the society. He supported people to develop more to be able the Lakshmi ka alankar daan hai."

The Eye Foundation of America presented tokens of appreciation to Parvati Datta, Prof. Ashraf and Ravindra Sharma, Anandita Rai, Prof. Ashraf and Ravindra Sharma, and HR Shah. He thanked the Indian Panorama for its support to the foundation.

Madhala, who calls himself "Foster child of Dr. Raju" as he



This is an evening with a purpose to recognize the tremendous humanitarian work done by Dr. Raju," said the Indian Panorama CEO (CEO) Prof. Ashraf Saluja, in his welcome speech.



"We need more things for being a change. First is education, second is education and third is education," said Dr. VK Raju, founder and President of the Eye Foundation of America, in his inspirational speech during on his vision of making the world free from childhood blindness.



HR Shah, Chairman & CEO of TV Asia said, "Without vision, there is no way for a person and without the effort of the world in working to prevent childhood blindness."



View of the Eye Foundation of America is honored, Mrs. Parvati Datta, founder and President of the wonderful educational and cultural institutions Bridgegate and Lakshmi ka alankar daan hai is presented a token of appreciation. L to R: Parvati Datta, Dr. VK Raju and HR Shah.



View of the Eye Foundation of America is honored, Anandita Rai, a beautiful ophthalmologist, is presented a token of appreciation. L to R: Anandita Rai, Dr. VK Raju and HR Shah.



View of the Eye Foundation of America is honored, Shashi Lakshmi who has to be known as Foster child of Dr. Raju, Shashi Lakshmi is presented a token of appreciation. L to R: Shashi Lakshmi, HR Shah, Anandita Rai, Dr. VK Raju.

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Dr. V.K. Raju inducted into hall of fame

Honored for charity work by University of Toledo

BY JIM BISSETT

The Dominion Post

You don't often see Dr. V.K. Raju sitting still. If you blinked, you may have missed it.

That's because the Morgantown ophthalmologist normally works in a blur, tending to the constant stream of patients that are in and out of his bustling Monongalia Eye Clinic, at 3340 Collins Ferry Road.

When he isn't there, he's everywhere, from Appalachia to Afghanistan, offering his services for free to treat patients suffering from glaucoma, cataracts and other potential robbers of sight.

Children, in particular: Blindness in children, he said, is a scourge to the developing world, the same as polio or tuberculosis in generations' past.

That's because so much blindness is preventable and treatable, he said.

"You just have to be there, as you can provide the care."

It was Good Friday and the clinic was closed, and Raju was finally sitting still.

He was perked at his desk, tending to a scowge of paperwork and talking about his most recent recognition.

RAJU

FROM PAGE 7-A

Monongalia Eye Clinic's offices. The book's cost is whatever donation you care to make to the Eye Foundation of America.

Raju was born and raised in Rajahmundry, a city known for its culture and commerce in India's southeastern Andhra Pradesh region.

His father died when he was a child, and he was raised by his mother, who grappled daily with diabetes and being a single parent.

He called the collection of essays "a love letter" to the country he left in 1968 for England, where, as a fledgling physician, he staffed emergency rooms and specialized in internal medicine at hospitals in London and Surrey.

In the book, he sprinkles in quotes from Gandhi and Harry Truman with mini-medical histories of India.

Ancient surgeons performed the first eye procedures there nearly 3,000 years ago, he said.

Raju was recruited to WVU because of his expertise in corneal transplants. He had opportunities to leave for private practice in California and a teaching post at the University of Chicago, but he stayed.

"This is the longest I've lived in one place," he said.

"West Virginia is so special and its potential still hasn't been realized. We can change that."

Longtime patient Charles Morgan, who was being treated for glaucoma, gave Raju a ringing endorsement.

"He knows what he's doing," Morgan previously told *The Dominion Post*.

"Because of him, I can see."



The plaque Dr. V.K. Raju received for being inducted into the Global Medical Missions Hall of Fame at the University of Toledo.

Submitted photo

Dr. V. K. Raju: Proud of Ancient Indian Medical Traditions

BY ASHOK DASH



The cover of Dr. Raju's recently released book, 'Manages on Medicine, Myth, and History'.

The inside walls of Dr. V.K. Raju's eye clinic in the picturesque town of Morgantown in West Virginia are covered with a variety of historical facts about the history of eye treatment in the world. The exhibit not only educates the visitor about the need to prevent eye disease, but also educates about major developments in the field of eye surgery in Western countries as well as in India.

Dr. Raju moved to Morgantown about forty years ago. "This is the place I called home after working in America," he said. Morgantown is situated among the hills of West Virginia offering a wide variety of natural wonders just a few miles away from the urban sector. As his practice thrived in this town, Dr. Raju continued to treat his patients with care and health at the West Virginia University. All along his journey as an eye doctor, he remained deeply committed to helping people in India, who needed help to correct their vision.

A native of Rajahmundry India, Raju was educated in India, Great Britain, and the US. He served as an adjunct clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University's School of Medicine. "Many years ago, when I was visiting India, I met a village, who needed immediate surgery of his eyes. Unfortunately, I hadn't carried my medical equipment with me. I felt sorry and for not being able to help him. Since then I realized the need to help people like him who needed care for their eyes," he recalled.

Dr. Raju continued to visit India where he volunteered his time conducting eye camps to



Dr. V.K. Raju examining a patient in his Morgantown eye clinic.

provided free service to patients. In order to institutionalize his efforts he established the Eye Foundation of America in 1980. Today, the

Foundation has treated many lives in USA and in India. The foundation has partnered with state organizations with similar goals to order to maximize its capabilities," he follows.

Raju also helped found the Greater Eye Institute in 2001, a fully equipped eye hospital in Rajahmundry India, where a wing is dedicated to children's eye problems. The Institute, also a teaching hospital, has sections for ophthalmology, general ophthalmology and performed multi services under its operation.

"The medical facilities are still not of reach to poor people in India," Dr. Raju said as he was discussing the ancient traditions of Ayurveda in India. "Even today we have areas where people losing their vision due to other surgery complications. It is not because eye camps are not capable of meeting out needs with eye problems. We lack other care facilities for them," he said.

Dr. Raju regularly talked about India's golden age of surgery. He pointed to one of the exhibits on the wall depicting the tools used for cataract during the ancient time of blind eye surgery. He said, "In the 16th century, who may be called the father



The Eye Clinic of Dr. V.K. Raju in Morgantown, WV, an eye camp for a day after which they receive cataract surgery with cataracts in the cataract and gas bubble-in operation with supervised in the operating room. The 900 patients of this experience is shared through 100 year traditions and 100 year traditions with personal experience in performing cataract surgery. Third year residents will join in response to students in the cataract.

Dr. Raju can be described as a human being who



Exhibits at Dr. Raju's Eye Care Clinic.

of surgery due to his extensive work found in 'Saraswati Samhita', taught and presented ophthalmology and cataract surgery in India was laid in 800 BC. The hundreds of years India was a leader in medical practice. We have since lost most of our ancient traditions of medicine and surgery. It is not that majority of eye ailments have been successfully eradicated by the West, while traditional eye problems remain children blind to be treated with a scalpel.

In a recently released book, 'Manages on Medicine, Myth, and History', that Dr. Raju authored along with his physician daughter Leela, he talks extensively on conditions found by children and poor people in India. "Three quarters of the world's blind children live in developing countries, and about five hundred thousand become blind each year. In India alone each childhood blindness results in a four billion dollar economic loss." (Page 22)

Dr. Raju felt that that focused Eye Institute conducts workshops and other programs to reach its staff about new medical techniques and equipment. This program has been expanded to include physicians and medical practitioners from all over the world. These workshops provide Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits. Fellowships available through Greater Eye Institute provide physicians from India to further their education. Residents at the hospital are expected to participate in research during

hours the heart of everyone. His long time teacher Dr. Clark, who has been working with him for the past 30 years comments about him, "The most important thing I like about Dr. Raju is the way he cares for the children of the world. He cares for everyone and treats his patients with equal care."

"West Virginia is like for the India," Dr. Clark, who enthusiastically said that she will serve when Dr. Raju will retire, commented about similarities among the people of West Virginia and India. "We are very similar people. Some parts of the state is pure coal and some parts are rich like those in India."

Dr. Raju continued to educate people his vision, also posted on the wall in his office. "There are three things people need: Education, education and education," he laughed. "You agree more with me, don't? I said remembering him for his untiring services for eradicating blindness among adults in general and children in particular."

As the dawn is full in the night, I covered the pages of his book and stopped to read. "The if people around the world can recognize the coordination to medicine that came from China and India, even today, perhaps they will be encouraged to lead their medicine in India and India will finally enter another golden age of medicine and will once again be a world leader in the study and practice of medicine." (Page 44)

Clark agrees more with you, Doc!



West Virginia Ophthalmologist Inducted Into University Of Toledo Hall Of Fame

By A. Bruce Womack

Vedra V.K. Raju, founder and medical director of the Eye Foundation of America in Morgantown, West Virginia, has been inducted into the Global Medical Milestone Hall of Fame in recognition of his efforts to eliminate avoidable blindness in parts of the world hit by poverty and poor access to medical care. The Indian-American doctor was formally inducted into the Hall of Fame of the University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences earlier this month along with the

Global Medical Center and Donald C. Muller. According to his bio data on the foundation's website, Raju, founder, states-of-the-art services through mobile eye camps and permanent brick-and-mortar hospitals through the foundation. These camps and hospitals have facilitated more than 600 ophthalmic surgeries, treated more than 200 ophthalmologists, served more million patients, and performed 3,00,000 vision-correcting surgeries in 21 countries. In a statement issued by the foundation, Raju said, as children (birth of sight weeks to 75 years of age) and productive life. "No child will be denied treatment, and children from around the world can come to receive world-class services," he said, adding, "V blindness is preventable,

there let us do it in a big way." Raju is currently a clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University where he has been teaching since 1978. Prior to that, he spent two years teaching at the Royal Eye Hospital of London. Raju is also the director of the International Ocular Surface Society. Raju received his medical degree from medical University, after which he moved to the University of London to complete an ophthalmology residency and fellowship. In the U.K., he completed an ophthalmology residency and fellowship at the University of London. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and of the American College of Surgeons.

Announcement



A Physician's Lifetime of Charity Work Inspired by His Mother

Philanthropic eye surgeon was inspired by his mother

By a Staff Writer

After finishing Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in London in 1975, Dr. V. K. Raju went for a few weeks holiday to his native Kutchhambodhi in Andhra Pradesh, where a farmer from the village came to get his eyes treated by him. The young doctor was a quackery as he did not have any treatment with him to check his eyesight. He explained to the farmer but could not help him at that time.

The next year, Raju moved to the United States to accept a faculty position at West Virginia University. But he had not forgotten about the incident.

The farmer's plight and the general lack of proper medical care in his native Kutchhambodhi and around the village continued to bother him.

In 1977, Raju went back to his village from America, this time carrying with him a few medical appliances.

He hoped to see that farmer again and to explore possibilities of providing eye and cataract surgery to the impoverished local residents. A few years later Raju, after consulting a few friends and local Rotary Club members, began to make annual trips to India, holding eye camps, especially for children. By then he had recruited a few local doctors to help him in his mission to eradicate what he calls avoidable childhood blindness.

"Childhood blindness remains still one of the major public health and we need to urgently reach that population to give it a better a fruitful and productive life and can come back to the society," Raju said in an interview. "This has been focused only on child donor's blindness.

In the last five decades, Raju and the Eye Foundation of America, which he founded in 1978, have performed more than 200,000 eye surgeries, including about 75,000 on children.

He has also set up two hospitals in Andhra Pradesh, including Govind Eye Institute, a fully equipped eye hospital in Kaphamurthy with a wing dedicated to children's eye care.

In 1991, he brought a 7-year-old child along with his parents from Andhra Pradesh to do a cataract surgery in the U.S.



Dr. V.K. Raju and the Eye Foundation of America have performed more than 200,000 surgeries.



at his own expense. "As an ophthalmologist and a surgeon I realized that if this critical surgery cannot be done before the age of five, this kid was going to be blind for the rest of his life," he said.

"I got guests who - essentially that I'd want to study in Rutgers University and the school his degree in pharmacy and now it is a great opportunity of ER's mission of eradicating blindness and its work."

Whether it is going back to India to set up eye camps, bringing a child to the U.S. to give him a cataract surgery or setting up hospitals to give him to eradicate preventable blindness, is everything that Raju has done in his life has been guided by his own motto - service to humanity - inspired upon him by his

mother in his childhood. "My father died when I was very young and my mother always used to tell me that service to humanity is the best thing one can do in life.

"When we do for whom should be our religion and the only religion and all that I continue to get inspired by my mother's words and carry on my mission," he said. "My work has just begun."

Raju has received many awards and honours in India and the U.S., including recognition as one of the leading physicians of the world by the National Indian Association of Ophthalmologists in 2014. He is being proposed this year by a number of the Indian Parliament for a Padma award, one of India's highest civilian honours.



Dr. V.K. Raju

"My mother always used to tell me that service to humanity is the best thing one can do in life"

Cataract surgery and controversy: Susruta-Daviel-Kelman

Controversy has surrounded many major breakthroughs in medicine; the field of Ophthalmology has not been immune. The anatomical origins of cataract have historically been matters of debate, despite the ancient Indian writings of Susruta (800-600 BC) that described cataract as a disorder of the lens.¹ Susruta may have been the first physician to perform surgery for cataracts, using a technique known as couching. Couching is a procedure in which an instrument is used to dislocate the cloudy lens from its anatomical position into the vitreous cavity.

Despite evidence to the contrary that couching was ineffective, it was widely used, even after Jacques Daviel proposed what he believed to be a superior technique: removal of the cloudy lens. Daviel honed his technique on *convalescents* as well as living slaves and prisoners. He subsequently learned that other French surgeons had successfully extracted lenses following removal of lens material in the anterior chamber of the eye, resulting in vision improvement after failed couching procedures. In 1752, Daviel presented evidence gathered from 206 consecutive patients in which he removed cataracts via corneal incisions; nearly 88% had "irreversible results." Daviel's peers were critical of his technique, and thus, the French Academy of Surgery initiated a surgical trial of 39 elderly soldiers with advanced cataracts; the soldiers were selected for participation for the trial by a hospital administrator. Three surgeons participated (1 of whom used the couching technique). Half of the couchings were deemed successful and 9 of 13 surgical lens removal outcomes were "good" or the "same as before the lens extraction." Interestingly, even this demonstration of efficacy did not dispel the notion that couching was preferable.²

In 1792, de la Faye performed corneal section in France using a novel single knife; however, Sharp was the first to employ the technique the following year in London, proclaiming that it shortened the surgical time and lessened pain. This slight modification of the technique enhanced Sharp's reputation, particularly in the English-speaking world, consequently diminishing Daviel's contribution. Similar controversy ensued when Charles Kelman introduced a new lens extraction technique, known as phacemulsification in 1967. In 1973, Kelman reported drastically reduced surgical time in 500 cases treated using the procedure; however, few ophthalmologists adopted phacemulsification. New equipment necessitated a steep learning curve, resulting in an increased rate of complications. Decades later, in 1994, over 25,000 records from a major survey were reviewed. It was incorrectly concluded that phacemulsification was as but not more effective than intracapsular surgery. This technique is now the standard for cataract surgery, coupled with implantation of an intraocular lens.³

Regrettably, the earlier advances in medicine (pioneered by Susruta, Hippocrates, and others) were gradually lost to the Western world in the first millennium AD, and the status of a surgeon in Europe was degraded to that of a tradesman. In fact, it was the town barber who performed the surgery of the day.⁴ Although the contributions of Susruta and Daviel are recognized today among modern ophthalmologists, they were not appreciated during their time. Western medicine did not accept the anatomical findings of Susruta, French surgeons did not readily accept that lens removal was superior, and American ophthalmologists resisted the technological advancement (phacemulsification of cataract) that is now the gold standard of modern cataract surgery. One could blame a lack of knowledge of ancient India and language barriers for the former; however, the latter are examples of resistance to novel treatments that were shown to benefit patient outcomes.

V K Raju, Leela Y Raju*

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India's Legacy of Medicine Heals an Increasingly Connected World

Ophthalmologist's book gives a window into the Indian system of Ayurveda

By a Staff Writer

In his more than four decades as a leading ophthalmologist, Dr. Vaidya K. "VK" Raju would often tell his patients about medicine's glorious past in India, a nation that boasted of physicians like Chanak, or surgeons like Susruta, and the immense contributions that India once made to the field of medicine.

Some patients believed him, but most acknowledged they had little idea that India followed its own unique system of medicine called Ayurveda. Most people in the West are familiar only with the modern allopathic system.

Over the years, many of his patients urged him to write a book on this little-known Indian system of medicine.

He received encouragement during casual conversations, both in the U.S. and other countries he visits frequently either to perform surgeries or give lectures on blindness and related disorders.

The encouragement worked. The result of decades of such persuasion and a little goading by his friends and relatives, including his daughter Leela Raju, a New York-based ophthalmologist, is a book by the internationally-acclaimed ophthalmologist "Musings on Medicine, Myth and History: India's Legacy," published by the Eye Foundation of America, an organization he founded in 1975.

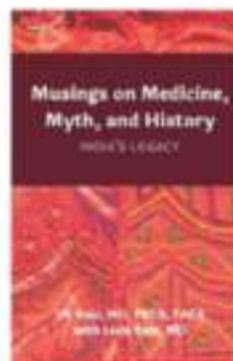
Published in 2017, the 172-page book is a collection of 14 essays culled from more than 30 scholarly papers he has written on the medical history of ancient



India. "I and my foundation, which is a nonprofit, have performed 300,000 eye surgeries, including about 25,000 on children in the last four decades. I always felt a sincere concern for my patients as individuals, not just as patients," he says.

"Rather than merely examining their eyes, I also talk to them, seeking to treat each patient as a whole. This 'whole person' approach as mentioned in Ayurveda, sometimes characterized as 'holistic' in the West, is something ingrained in ancient Indian tradition," he writes in his book.

The book explains India's legacy and remains relevant in an increasingly connected world. Raju says that while well-known Greek physician Hippocrates is most likely to be identified by people worldwide as the father of medi-



cine, it is difficult to determine which culture has made more contributions to the development of medicine. "It might be more worthwhile to examine the similarities between Ancient Greek and Ancient Indian medicine - and there are many," he says.

'Musings on Medicine, Myth and History: India's Legacy' is V.K. Raju's tribute to tradition

Besides giving detailed descriptions of Susruta's surgery techniques, including cataract surgery as mentioned in Susruta Sutrak, Raju describes the ancient Indian surgery as a man undoubtedly ahead of his time.

"He was perhaps the most forward thinking and perhaps the most prolific when it came to ophthalmology," he says.

One of the attractions of the book is the inclusion of 2016-known facts, such as the exis-

tence of a group called the Charaka Club in New York in the year 1906.

It was originally named Modern Historical Club and was founded in 1897 by five medical men in New York City. The Charaka Club entered its last volume of proceedings in 1916.

The club's mission was a thoughtful exploration of the dichotomy between the scientific and the hermetic.

In one chapter, the author shares jokes, myths and satire and the evil spoken of physicians throughout the ages.

Later, he discusses the effects of globalization on health care, specifically the negative effect of medical tourism in which affluent foreigners drive up costs in developing countries such as India.

Raju notes that globalization has enabled patients, generally from more developed countries, to become medical tourists.

While this is great for traveling patients, the benefit is much less for countries to which they travel. "When medical tourists flock to India - as about 150,000 did in 2009 alone, the country's total patients, many of whom already have great difficulty accessing affordable modern care, lose out," he writes.

Proceeds from the sale of the book, he said, will go to the West Virginia-based Eye Foundation of America. Raju has received many awards and honors in India and the U.S., including recognition as one of the Leading Physicians of the World by the International Association of Ophthalmologists in 2014.

Sponsored Content



V.K. RAJU

Education still the solution to every problem

MY MENTOR IN LONDON (during my ophthalmology residency) used to say, "There are three solutions for every problem or any problem: First is education, second is education and third is education."

According to a report published by the US News & World Report, eight of the top 10 colleges and universities in the world are in the U.S. Today over one million international students are studying here.

What about elementary and secondary education? In 1965, the far-reaching Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided funds for primary and secondary education. The main goal was the elimination of poverty and racial injustice.

Yet, the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, from 2015, placed the U.S. at an unimpressive 38th out of 71 countries in math and 24th in science.

The U.S. ranks 17th in overall educational performance, according to the Huffington Post. The "Learning Curve," developed by The Economist, ranks the U.S. 17th out of 40 countries in overall educational performance. Finland ranks first.

Finland's objective is to provide all citizens with equal opportunities. The potential of every individual should be maximized. Education is free at all levels. Adult education has a long and strong tradition. The education system is based on trust and responsibility. Most private institutions do not differ from those that are publicly maintained.

Every child has a subjective right to attend early childhood education and care. It can take place at kindergartens or smaller family daycare groups in private homes. The fees are moderate and based on parental income. Basic education starts in the year when a child turns seven and lasts nine years.

Most students continue their studies after basic education. In many ways, Finland's education system shows us that "less is more."

Teaching is an attractive career choice in Finland. Teachers are recognized as keys to quality in education.

The U.S. spends more per student on education than any other country. Yet, in the U.S., we cannot stick to one philosophy of education long enough to see if it actually works.

We are constantly trying new methods, ideas and initiatives. We believe "more" is the answer (like in healthcare) to all of our educational problems. Everything can be solved with more classes, longer days, more homework, more assignments, more pressure, more content, more meetings, more after-school tutoring and, finally, more testing.

This may result in more burnt-out teachers, more stressed-out students and more frustration.

Plato believed that children would never learn unless they wanted to learn.

Let me end with a final quote of Abraham Flexner (even if Plato might not agree). "Without ideals, without effort, without scholarship, without philosophical continuity, there is no such thing as education."

V.K. RAJU is a member of The Dominion Post's Community Advisory Board.



By Dr. V.K. Raju

Eye Foundation of America, founded in 1971 is a not-for-profit body engaged in the mammoth task of preventing blindness among children. Its Founder and Chairman Dr. V.K. Raju who is an internationally acclaimed ophthalmologist dreams of a world without childhood blindness. - EDITOR

My crusade for the past four decades has been to achieve my vision of a world without childhood blindness. In pursuit of this vision, I created the Eye Foundation of America (EFA), a non-profit organization. In 1977, I began traveling home to India to offer my services as an ophthalmologist to those who could not afford, or access desperately needed eye care. These preventive services and medical and surgical interventions were delivered the form of eye camps in the early days, and the EFA was initially founded to allow for easier transfer of state-of-the-art equipment and medicine from the United States to India. As the Foundation matured, it became so much more. The EFA is now a global organization responsible for treating millions of patients, performing hundreds of thousands of surgeries, and training



hundreds of eye care professionals to join in the global fight against avoidable blindness. Our work spans 25 countries over several continents.

We treat the aged and the young, but children hold a special place in our hearts. The EFA has helped to build two hospitals in India; one of those hospitals, the Goutami Eye Institute, has a wing dedicated to children and a one-of-a-kind program to screen newborn babies for congenital problems that can lead to blindness if not treated. Despite these vast accomplishments, however, our work is only just beginning. The EFA has future plans to build an international service and research eye hospital for children in India, the Green Eye Hospital, where no child will be denied treatment and children from around the world can come to receive services.

If blindness is preventable, then let us do it big. And, someday, hopefully soon, a world without childhood blindness will become a reality.

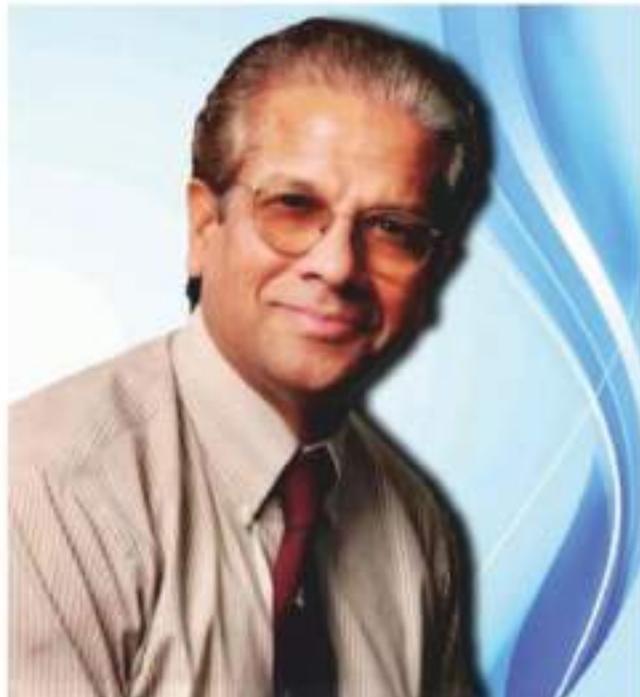
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Restoring vision is his lifelong mission

Sandeep Saxena

Each day when I get up, I remind myself that I should make a difference. This is the zeal with which West Virginia (USA) based Dr. V.K. Raju lives. Born in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Raju earned his medical degree from India and went on to complete an ophthalmology residency and fellowship at the Royal Eye Group of Hospitals in London, England. He moved to the USA in 1976 and is currently a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University (WVU). One of the top Ophthalmologists in the world, Dr. Raju annually conducts around 25 corneal transplants; about 400 cataract surgeries; and handles more than 7000 patient visits.

Dr. Raju has deep Gandhian influence on his psyche and is devoted to serving the most underprivileged in India. Back in the 1970s, while on a vacation in India a farmer asked him to examine his eyes. Dr. Raju complied, but he was without any instruments. However, he judged the need for eye care in villages and among the poor. So, in 1977, Dr. Raju returned to rural India with personnel and equipment, and offered his first eye camp near his hometown. This formed the basis of his founding the non-profit Eye Foundation of America or EFA with an aim to eliminate avoidable blindness in areas plagued by poverty and poor access to medical care under the guiding principles of service, teaching and research. EFA's mission is accomplished through eye camps and missionary hospitals in developing countries, training of medical personnel to serve the needy, and educating the population at large



Since childhood vision impairments have an impact on education as learning is done 80 per cent through vision, therefore the EFA's work revolves around a singular mission of eradicating childhood blindness

on preventative eye care and healthy lifestyle choices.

With the aim of permanently providing world-class, state-of-the-art services to populations having poor access to health care, the EFA has helped build two hospitals in rural India, namely the Srikan

Eye Institute and the Goutami Eye Institute. The Goutami Institute has a wing dedicated to exclusively to children, and the EFA has future plans to build a service and research eye hospital in India where no child will be denied treatment. In fact, children from around the world would be able

to come to receive services here. Dr. Raju and the EFA are also committed to finding new cures for age-old eye diseases in children.

The EFA has served approximately 3 million patients and performed 300,000 plus vision-saving surgeries, with 30,000 plus surgeries performed on children alone. Today, the EFA, has a reach that extends to 30 plus developing countries and the USA.

Dr. Raju has received many honors and awards, including 20 distinguished awards and 17 gold medals besides the Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award from WVU in 2008. The American Academy of Ophthalmology has awarded Dr. Raju 4 times for his teaching and research contributions, including the Outstanding Humanitarian Award in 2002. He is also a recipient of the Vidya Ratna award in 2002. In 2014, Dr. Raju got the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award for Achievement in Medicine. It isn't a surprise that Dr. Raju was presented with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the US President Barack Obama in 2016.

With all momentous achievements, Dr. Raju has also ensured that his lifetime work and vision are self-sustaining. Dr. Raju has passed on his knowledge, plans and vision to the future leaders of his movement. Dr. Leela Raju, his daughter and fellow ophthalmologist, is the Secretary of EFA and Coordinator for Education who actively participates in driving the EFA's mission.

The soft-spoken Dr. Raju says, "Every morning, I wake up and start the day by saying God ... morning." It is his way of seeking divine blessings to forward His mission of doing more and more good to the world. ■

'EyeAdvance' 2018 Congress organized by the Indian Academy of Ophthalmology Honors Dr. VK Raju



Dr. VK Raju was awarded the "Meritorious Services Gold Medal in Ophthalmology".

Photo / Courtesy 'EyeAdvance'

Internationally acclaimed, Morgantown, WV based Ophthalmologist Dr. VK Raju was recently honored at the XIIth International Congress on Advances in Ophthalmology, 'EyeAdvance' 2018 congress organized by the Indian Academy of Ophthalmology in Mumbai.

"We are honored that you accepted the award of the "Meritorious Services Gold Medal in Ophthalmology". An honor, truly, richly deserved", said Prof. Dr. Keiki R. Mehta, Congress Chairman: EyeAdvance' 2018.

The congress was a grand success with an attendance of 1951 delegates. The faculty was overwhelmingly superb, and the audience loved them.

"Your presentations were very highly praised. Your talks, as always, were simply superb and the quantum of knowledge you extended to the audience, mind-boggling. Every presentation of yours was listened to with rapt attention. It was listening to your presentation that had literally made the day for all the delegates attending", Dr Mehta said in a letter to Dr. Raju.

Dr. Raju honored for his four-decade crusade to eradicate avoidable blindness in India

KAKINADA, AP (TIP): Dr. V.K. Raju, an eminent ophthalmologist based in Morgantown, West Virginia, USA was honored for his over 40 years work to eradicate avoidable blindness in India during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Rangaraya Medical College in Kakinada on Saturday, January 5. The award was presented to him by the Vice President of Indi, M Venkaiah Naidu who was the chief guest. This award adds to a long list of awards and honors conferred on Dr. Raju.

Dr. V.K. Raju is founder and president of the Eye Foundation of America, a nearly 40-year-old not-for-profit engaged in the work of eradication of preventable blindness across the world. (www.eyefoundationofamerica.org)

Dr. V.K. Raju was on a visit to India to attend a couple of conferences and speak at some events. He was in Mumbai on December 28 to attend the AAPI-GAPPO Summit where he spoke on Diabetes & its Pandemic health consequences.

In Kolkata on January 1, Dr. Raju spoke at Kolkata Rotary Club, which is the oldest Rotary Club in India and which will be celebrating its centenary towards the end of 2019. Dr. Raju was the keynote speaker on childhood blindness.

Addressing the Rotarians he complimented them for their tremendous achievement in "wiping out Polio in 28 years. He exhorted them to evince the same zeal in respect of preventing avoidable blindness from the face of India.

"If Rotary puts in its effort for as many years, we can have a world without blindness, he said, reminding that "80% of our learning comes through vision". It needs only three wills- political will, professional will, and people's will to achieve the desired goal. He quoted US Ambassador Galbraith, the hyper educated economist of the world who underscored the importance of education when he said, "Education is the most effective equalizer".

While in Kolkata, he took the opportunity of spending 2 days at the Asiatic Library where he studied the original Bowerman manuscripts dealing with Yoga.

Dr. Raju delivered a lecture at Andhra Medical College at Vishakhapatnam on January 2. He also attended a meeting at the Eye Bank where he pointed out that corneal blindness which is rampant in India, is preventable. In fact, 70% of it can be prevented through education and affordable primary care in every village.

Next, in Kakinada on January 5, Dr. Raju attended the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Rangaraya Medical College where he was honored for his work by the Vice President of India.

However, the most absorbing engagement for Dr. Raju was lecturing to staff and examining patients at the Eye Foundation of America supported Goutami Eye Institute in Rajahmundry. Over a period of 5 days, Dr. Raju worked day and night with the Goutami Eye Institute staff, examining hundreds of patients who have great faith in Dr. Raju and Goutami Eye Institute.

Leading by Example, Leadership at Its Best

As founder of the Eye Foundation of America, Dr. V.K. Raju has more than 30 years of experience combating avoidable blindness by providing free and subsidized eye treatment in developing countries. In that time, he has reached more than 1.7 million people in 23 countries.

Dr. Raju's 30-year global crusade against blindness which has been recognized by American Medical Association (AMA) in its honoring Dr. Raju with its prestigious Dr. Nathan David International Award.

The "Excellence in Medicine Award" recognizes Dr. Raju as an extraordinary person in medicine and offers tribute to the individual lives that he has touched through sight-saving procedures worldwide.

After receiving the award, Dr. Raju expanded his mission through the Eye Foundation of America's "100,000 Lives" eyesight-saving campaign.

The campaign's goal is to provide eye care to 100,000 people in rural India during 2014. Foundation founder and medical director Dr. V. K. Raju says the effort targets avoidable blindness by identifying and helping people who suffer from diabetes and are at risk for or may already be suffering from, diabetic retinopathy.

"Although we have reached an initial fundraising milestone, we still need to raise a lot more money to reach our goal of \$1 million that will let us actually put everything into motion for this diabetic retinopathy initiative."

In addition to the 100,000 Lives Campaign, the Eye Foundation is also run-

ning a major gift giving campaign for their Children's initiative to help prevent avoidable blindness around the world, as both campaigns are tremendously important and are running simultaneously. (The Eye Foundation also raises money to support a variety of other avoidable blindness endeavors, including vital work within the US).

As his numerous awards have evidenced, Dr. Raju leads by example. He has not only given his time and energy throughout the decades, but to date, is the foundation's number one funder.



More than 15 years ago Dr. Raju vowed to donate all of the proceeds from his refractive surgeries to the EFA. As time progressed and Lasik procedures evolved, he continued to donate through this ve-

hide and honor his word.

Some of the proceeds that Dr. Raju gave through this effort were used to provide glasses to those in developing countries. Dr. Raju comments, "In developing countries the second most common vision problem is that people cannot get glasses".

Although Dr. Raju has donated personal funds above and beyond that particular pledge, he comments, "Following through on donating monies earned from my Lasik procedures has been a great pleasure, because my patients in an effort to get rid of their glasses have actually provided glasses and much more to those in need".

Leading by example, Dr. V.K. Raju!

For information on The Eye Foundation of America go to www.eyefoundationofamerica.org.

American Academy of Ophthalmology

The Board of Trustees presents this

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to

Vadrevu K. Raju MD FRCS FACS

for many years of distinguished service in the programs of this Society

2023



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Best wishes to V.K. Raju -

Jimmy Carter

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